REPORT RESUMES

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PROGRAM TO EXTEND CURRICULM MATERIALS IN ENGLISH FOR THE ABLE TO A WIDER STUDENT GROUP. FINAL REPORT.

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THE PURPOSE OF THIS PROJECT WAS TO DETERMINE (1) IF A TEACHER GIVEN NO SPECIAL TRAINING IN THE EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY AND METHODS OF THE CURRICULUM STUDY CENTER AT CARNEGIE INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY COULD ADEQUATELY TEACH ITS MATERIALS AND (2) IF THESE MATERIALS (DESIGNED FOR USE WITH EXCEPTIONALLY INTELLIGENT STUDENTS) COULD, WITH SOME MODIFICATION, BE TAUGHT EFFECTIVELY TO AVERAGE STUDENTS. FOR TWO ACADEMIC YEARS, SIX CLASSES OF AVERAGE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN GRADES 10-12 WERE TAUGHT THE CARNEGIE CENTER'S ENGLISH CURRICULUM BY TEACHERS WHO WERE GIVEN ONLY THE MATERIALS FOR THE COURSES, WITHOUT FURTHER INSTRUCTION. RESULTS INDICATED THAT THE MATERIALS CAN BE TAUGHT BY TEACHERS WITHOUT PREVIOUS SPECIAL TRAINING, AND THAT, WITH MODIFICATIONS, THE PROGRAM IS MORE SUCCESSFUL THAN TRADITIONAL INSTRUCTION WITH STUDENTS OF AVERAGE ABILITY. HOWEVER, TEACHERS RECOMMENDED THE FOLLOWING MAJOR MODIFICATIONS IN THE PROGRAM FOR USE WITH AVERAGE STUDENTS--(1) THAT THE QUANTITY OF READING BE REDUCED, (2) THAT THE RECOMMENDED INDUCTIVE TEACHING METHOD BE VARIED BY USING SEVERAL OTHER PROCEDURES, (3) THAT THE QUANTITY OF AUDIO-VISUAL MATERIALS BE SUBSTANTIALLY INCREASED, (4) THAT STUDENTS BE GIVEN MORE TRAINING IN COMPOSITION, (5) THAT STUDENTS NOT BE GRADED ANY MORE STRINGENTLY THAN THEY OTHERWISE WOULD BE, AND (6) THAT THE WHOLE THREE-YEAR PROGRAM BE USED RATHER THAN ANY SINGLE YEAR OF IT. (THE TEXTS OF THE REPORTS OF THE SIX PARTICIPATING TEACHERS ARE APPENDED.) (DL)

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FINAL REPORT
Project No. H-162
Contract No. OE-5-10-090

PROGRAM TO EXTEND CURRICULUM MATERIALS IN ENGLISH FOR THE ABLE TO A WIDER STUDENT GROUP

December 1967

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
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Final Report
Project No. H-162
Contract No. OE-5-10-090

Program to Extend Curriculum Materials in English for the Able to a Wider Student Group

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Summary

In the present project, a sequential and cumulative English curriculum developed for able (the top 20%) senior high school students was presented to students of average academic ability to determine whether the courses could be taught effectively to a wider student group than they were designed for. The curriculum used was the one developed at the Curriculum Study Center in English established at Carnegie Institute of Technology in 1962 under the auspices of Project English.

The project also sought to determine whether teachers not especially trained at the Carnegie Curriculum Study Center could effectively use the curriculum materials, depending only on the written materials themselves. Two teams of three teachers each taught the courses in high schools in the City of Pittsburgh in successive academic years, 1964-1965 and 1965-1966. Each teacher wrote a substantial evaluative report on the successes and failures of the experiment. Their papers constitute the Appendix to this Final Report.

In the main, the results of the project were positive. Relying only upon the printed materials of the Carnegie Center, the six teachers judged that the students of average academic ability had profited more from the experimental courses than they would have from the traditional program. However, only one teacher judged the program to be successful in almost every aspect. The others all qualified their evaluations with thoughtful recommendations for modification of the program suited to the needs of students of average academic ability. The major modifications recommended were that the quantity of reading in the literature program be reduced, that the recommended teaching method (heavily dependent upon class discussion) be varied by using several other procedures, that the number of audio-visual materials be substantially increased, that these students be given much more time for training in composition, and that the whole of the three-year program should be used rather than any single year of it. The Director of the program includes in his report a strong caution to teachers using this program for students of average academic ability: that they do not grade the students more stringently than they otherwise would, simply because the program may appear to be more demanding than the traditional program.

Teachers who wish to use the English curriculum developed at the Carnegie Curriculum Study Center to instruct students of average academic ability will find in the complete report not only encouragement to do so but also wise recommendations for the modification of the courses which will make them more effective for their students.

I. Introduction

Objectives of the Program

This report deals with a project related to and dependent upon the work of the Curriculum Study Center in English established at Carnegie Institute of Technology in 1962, USOE Project No. H-015. This Center had as its goal the development of a sequential and cumulative program in English for able college-bound students in the senior high school, grades 10 through 12. During the first two years of this development the staff of the Center became convinced that with some modification the courses could be taught effectively to a broader spectrum of academic students than those designated as "able" (the top 20%). Furthermore, the courses developed at the Center were all being presented by teachers who themselves helped to plan them; obviously these teachers were uniquely prepared to offer the courses. If the developed program was to be widely adopted in the future, it would have to be presented by teachers who would not have this special experience, but who would become acquainted with the courses chiefly or exclusively through the written materials produced at the Curriculum Study Center. In short, if the program could be used more widely than for a limited group of students in the seven developmental schools, the Center needed to know the answers to two questions:

> (1) whether a teacher who had not been especially trained in the educational philosophy and methods of instruction developed at the Center could adequately teach the courses, relying chiefly upon the written materials produced by the Center; and
> (2) whether these courses could, with some modification, be taught with effectiveness to the general academic student (not just to the upper 20% of high school students).

The objective of the present program was to provide the answers to these two questions.

The Setting

In a very real sense, then, the present program was dependent upon the existence of the Curriculum Study Center at Carnegie Institute of Technology. It was concerned with making available to a wider group--both of students and teachers--the curriculum being developed by the Center. The facilities of the present program were provided by the Center, and the Director of this program was also the Director of the Center, serving with no additional compensation in time and with no cost to the U. S. Office of Education.

The operational plan of the present program was to engage three teachers in the 1964-65 school year to present a course each to a section of average-ability academic students at one of the three grade levels (10th, 11th, and 12th) in three different high schools. A second team of three teachers were engaged to repeat the experiment in the following academic year, 1965-66. In each year the teachers were given the materials of the courses in the summer before presenting them to their classes, but they were not given any further instruction in advance. They were thus in the position of teachers in an area of the nation distant from Pittsburgh, who might become acquainted with the courses developed at the Center through the written materials and proceed to present the courses to their own students.

The teachers in the program did confer with the Director from time to time during the year they were teaching, but they were deliberately not given special instruction in advance, which would weaken the intent of the project. They agreed to keep notes of the problems involved in teaching the program, and they were engaged during the summer following their academic year to write a comprehensive evaluative report of their experience with the program. Illness caused considerable delay in the submission of two of these reports; but all six were finally completed, and they are attached as a significant appendix to this Final Report on the project.

Arrangements were made with the Board of Public Education of the City of Pittsburgh for the six teachers in the program to teach "average academic classes" in three high schools according to the following schedule:

	1964-65	1965-66
Langley High School	10th grade	11th grade
Perry High School	11th grade	12th grade
South Hills High School	12th grade	10th grade

The teachers were in a special category; they were not regular staff members of the City schools. They were engaged by the Carnegie Director of the program, and they were approved for teaching one course in the City high school by the Pittsburgh Board of Education. Each teacher was engaged to teach a single section of general academic students for one school year, to study and record the problems arising in presenting the course to such students, and--in the summer following--to write an evaluative report containing useful recommendations. This experimental work was considered half-time employment; in the other half of their time they pursued a Master of Arts in English degree at Carnegie Institute of Technology.

Historical Review of the Program

The contract was negotiated in July, 1964. The Director immediately confirmed arrangements with the Board of Education of the City of Pittsburgh that three sections of average academic ability would be taught by three promising teachers who were enrolling in the Master of Arts in English program at Carnegie Institute of Technology. He then engaged the three teachers for the program: Mrs. Maxine N. Brandenburg, to teach a tenth-grade section in Langley High School; Mrs. Patricia P. Sellars, to teach an eleventh-grade class in Perry High School; and Mrs. Marjorie W. Weinhold, to teach a twelfth-grade class in South Hills High School. The teachers were each given a set of the appropriate Curriculum Study Center materials and a set of appropriate textbooks.

The budget of the program included the cost of the textbooks to be used by the students. Accordingly 35 copies of each text were purchased, and the books were transported to the schools where they were to be used. Since each course demanded twelve to eighteen books per students, this action required no little attention and effort on the part of the Administrative Assistant of the Curriculum Study Center.

The first team of three teachers presented the courses during the academic year 1964-65. They met periodically with the Director and discussed the progress of their classes as well as certain modifications of the courses which seemed desirable. They kept notes of their experiences in anticipation of the evaluative report to be written in the summer of 1965. Although they worked conscientiously during the summer weeks, the final completion and submission of the reports took considerably more time than anticipated. The Director found it desirable to review the manuscripts with each author and to make editorial suggestions in the interest of stylistic consistency before the reports were finally mimeographed.

In the summer of 1965, three replacement teachers were engaged. It had been reported that several of the students who had taken the tenth-grade and eleventh-grade program requested that they be permitted to continue with the next year of the curriculum. Accordingly the Director arranged to have the sets of textbooks transferred from school to school so that the teachers in the second year of the program might observe the cumulative effectiveness of the program for students of average ability. The teachers assignments also followed this arrangement: Mrs. Lillian Ryave was assigned a tenth-grade class in South Hills High School; Miss Philaine Katz, an eleventh-grade class in Langley High School; Mr. Richard S. Wells, a twelfth-grade class in

Perry High School. The promise of this plan did not come to full fruition, as is detailed in the teachers' reports. A number of the first-year students had schedules that did not allow them to be in the second-year classes; consequently, any significant observation of a two-year cumulative effect was not possible.

In the summer of 1966, the second group of three teachers were engaged to write their comprehensive reports, having the advantage of the previous reports to assist their own evaluations. However, at the conclusion of the academic year 1965-66, one of the teachers was too ill to undertake the summer work, and another became ill during the summer. Their reports were consequently delayed several months, and in the meantime the Curriculum Study Center at Carnegie Institute of Technology had completed its program and its staff organization was dissolved. However, finally all of the teachers' reports were secured. They form an important and substantial appendix to this report.

II. Findings and Recommendations

The findings of this program are documented in the 143 pages of the attached Appendix, which contains the evaluative reports written by the six teachers who engaged in the program. This summary written by the Director of the program makes frequent reference to pages in the Appendix; the page numbers in the Appendix are indicated so that interested readers may readily locate the more specific statements of the teachers. Because of the nature of this report, the findings are spelled out in some detail and they contain the recommendations and conclusions. For the convenience of the reader, the recommendations and conclusions are briefly restated in the section following.

Findings

A. The curriculum designed at the Carnegie Center to be presented to able college-bound students was in fact more successful than the traditional English program when taught to average academic students in the senior high school. The teachers' estimates varied from its being entirely successful (pp. 107-08 in Appendix) to a much more measured judgement that its advantages "outweigh its limitations" (p. 20). Most of the teachers expressed reservations and qualifications--as should be expected when the curriculum was designed for a more talented group of students than the ones involved in this experiment. But the initial assumption of the program (that a good part of this curriculum might make a successful contribution to the education of average academic students) was borne out in actual practice. Many qualifications of this conclusion appear among the following findings; but it should be kept in mind that these are qualifications of a program that was judged unanimously to be more successful than the traditional program.

B. The concept of "average academic" student is given a detailed definition in most of the teachers' reports. The Pittsburgh schools agreed to make this type of student available for the program. It is interesting and instructive to learn, from the actual composition of the classes, the kind of students that one of the forward-looking urban school systems in the nation advances as its "average academic" students. Most of the schools did assign to this program students who were taking the "academic" curriculum, though one school drew a quarter of the class from the "commercial" students. The I.Q. range of the students in the experimental classes varied from the extreme limits of 89 to 128, with the average limits of the six classes being 92 to 121. The mediam I.Q. of these classes seems to be 108.

The number of students who had aspirations to attend college varied widely, from class to class. In one tenth-grade class all but two of 32 students expected to attend college (p. 3); in another school, only one tenth-grade student out of 24 hoped for college (p. 81). In the third school involved in the program, about half of the experimental class anticipated applying to enter college. To some of the teachers, this percentage seemed very important; one teacher felt that the response to the experimental curriculum was determined more by the college ambitions of the students than by any other consideration (p. 61); another teacher was shocked by the fact that only half of his class had aspirations for college and that one of his students "blatently selected truck driving" as his anticipated career (p. 131).

Most of the teachers felt that a student group whose ability did not rank as high as the class they were teaching should not attempt the experimental curriculum. In reviewing the teachers' reports, the Director of the program is inclined to agree. He would recommend that only classes whose median I.Q. is 108 or more should attempt the curriculum designed at the Carnegie Curriculum Study Center--and in addition that such classes as these should be subject to the qualifications which appear in the findings that follow.

Of as much interest as objective measures are the teachers' subjective impressions of these average academic students. There are several expressions of disappointment in the capacity of the students to read with comprehension. One teacher felt it necessary to introduce special instruction in reading for one period a week (p. 81). All of the teachers found that the students were unable to complete anything like the quantity of reading set forth in the course designed for able students. More disturbing is the comment by the teachers of the twelfth grade classes. One was appalled by the students' "gross passivity" and judged that "they had been grievously sinned against somewhere along the line. As a result, they had built up a keenly defined resistance against reading, discussion, and opinionating in the English classroom" (p. 133). The other twelfth-grade teacher had a remarkably similar observation; she has written, "they actually resent being held responsible for class discussion. They are unhappy, too, with not being told the one 'right' answer to all questions. On the other hand, they especially need this kind of experience..." (p. 65).

C. The method of teaching which is built into the program is the inductive method. The typical procedure is that the teacher plays the role of questioner, and the students learn by working through to the answers in class discussion. This method is highly successful for the articulate able students for whom it was designed. All of the teachers commented on its comparative effectiveness when employed with the average academic students.

The overall response to the inductive method is perhaps most succinctly summarized by the comment of an eleventh-grade student that is used as the epigraph to one report: "It was hard at first, but then I really started to like it" (p. 105). Report after report confirms the initial difficulty that the teachers had in getting the students to engage in discussion in which the students themselves were called upon to search out the answers. Such engagement developed slowly, and in some instances almost painfully; but the typical experience was that by the end of the school year the students were involved in the discovery process, and in most instances they were responding favorably to it. One teacher summarizes this effect quite clearly: "Although there is initial rebellion at being expected to make their own discoveries and draw on their own conclusions, this reaction of the students gives way eventually to a sense of satisfaction and accomplishment, as well as to more meaningful learning." (p. 69)

In spite of the ultimate success of the method, the teachers have made three qualifying recommendations. One is that the average academic student needs considerable variety; he becomes over-saturated with a steady diet of class discussion, and other means of engaging his attention must be sought. The teachers employed several procedures to achieve such variety: panel discussions, oral reports, reading and acting of parts (in studying drama), brief writing sessions, prepared answers to study questions. Although the teachers have spoken of these as variants from the inductive process, it is clear that they were still seeking to involve the students in a discovery process, and the main intention of the inductive method was certainly being observed. This can only be applauded. However, in a few of the reports there is the suggestion that the students were occasionally involved in busy-work on the theory that they felt more comfortable when they were not called upon to think for themselves. If this is really so, it is regrettable.

A second recommendation made by the teachers is highly pertinent, and anyone using the Carnegie materials would be well-advised to consider it. This is that the discussion questions as set forth in the lesson plans of the curriculum are either too complex or pitched at too high a level of abstraction for the students to deal with them without certain groundwork being laid. Undoubtedly this observation is quite true, even for many classes of able students. Because of limitations of space and time it was necessary for the designers of the original program to set down in five or six questions the main centers of emphasis that each lesson was focusing upon. It should be understood that many of these questions--perhaps most of them--need to be led up to by a sequence of pointed minor questions that will lay the groundwork for the major questions. The preliminary questions will vary according to the readiness of the students to deal with the major issues, and their nature must be determined by the resourcefulness of the teacher responding to a specific class. One of the teachers found that she had to use perhaps ten questions of her own to reach one of the major issues that appeared in the written lesson plan (p. 63). This suggests that a teacher who attempts the inductive method must expect to make a considerable contribution to the process, no matter how carefully the materials have spelled out the program in advance.

A third recommendation made by several of the teachers can only receive the wholehearted endorsement of the designers of the program. This is that students should be given the entire three-year sequence of courses rather than any single year of the planned program. The conditions of this experiment resulted in the fact that the majority of students were experiencing their first contact with the program. The teachers found that the students consequently had to adjust to an educative process which seemed entirely "new" to them. This period of adjustment continued through most of the initial academic year. The one class in this experimental program which inspired the most glowing teacher report of the six was the only one that truly was taking its second year of the curriculum: "most of the students had been in the tenth-grade Project English class, so that they were 'ready'" (p. 10S). The other teachers strongly recommended that the sequential program be used in its entirety if satisfactory results were to be hoped for.

D. Another finding of general application is closely related to the former. The teachers agreed that this program can be presented effectively to average academic students only by a teacher who has a more than common flexibility and background. All of the teachers agreed that the prepared materials of the program were well integrated and extremely helpful, but that the inductive method, as well as the materials in language study, required a teacher of more than average ability and knowledge in order to deal satisfactorily with unforseen questions sure to be raised by the students.

E. Most of the teachers recommended that the amount of audio-visual materials in the prepared program was insufficient for the average academic student. They found that the audio-visual materials designed for use in the early part of the composition work and in the language lessons were well chosen and essentially effective, but they recommended that the materials for composition be considerably extended and that a whole host of materials be assembled for use with the literature program. In the opinion of the teachers, the average academic student has a far greater need of audio-visual materials than has the able student.

F. Another recommendation made by some teachers (see p. 15 and p. 72) is that the prepared materials should include bibliographies listing scholarly and critical works that would be useful for the teacher. The designers of the program had considered this question and had decided--not without misgivings--that such bibliographies might introduce more frustration than help to the very busy secondary school teacher. Certainly it is true that the better informed the teacher is, the greater potential he has for holding enlightening classes. But this involves the whole progress of his professional and personal growth, extending over a term of years, and goes well beyond the immediate needs that course materials are designed to satisfy.

G. There were many specific comments made on the literature portion of the prepared curriculum--far too many to mention in a summary report. The one comment that all teachers agreed upon was that the quantity of reading included in the curriculum designed for able students is beyond the capacity of the average academic student. All of the teachers found it necessary to delete certain works of literature from the program. This, of course, was expected. After conferences on this subject with the teachers, the Director has one suggestion for other teachers who plan to use this program with average academic students: it is wise to anticipate a substantial number of deletions and to plan to scatter these throughout the school year rather than simply not to finish the planned course of study. It is better to reduce each unit of the course than to omit any of the units entirely, particularly the concluding units.

Of the many comments on specific titles, it is practicable to select only a few for notice in this part of the report. The Tale of Two Cities offered problems in the early part of the tenth-grade course (see p. 6 and p. 90), partly because of its vocabulary and partly because of its intellectual sophistication. Thoreau's Walden appears to be too challenging for the eleventh-grade classes (see p. 49 and p.114); the lyric poetry caused more problems than anything else in the twelfth-grade (see p. 65 and p. 133). But, in spite of certain difficulties, the teachers hesitated to recommend the exclusion of these important works; all of the teachers felt that the literature program as a whole was well designed, effectively integrated, and for the most part quite useable (with modifications) for the average academic student.

H. For most of the teachers, the composition materials were successful. They praised the specific directions and illustrations provided for the early papers at each grade level; however, they would have liked more such specific materials to accompany the composition work throughout the school year. They recommended a number of additions to the program prepared for able students. First, they found that the composition work, to be effective, must be allotted more time than was originally scheduled for it. Second, they found that the "average academic" students are weak in mechanics and spelling and clearly need much work in these areas (which is not provided in the curriculum for able students). Third, many teachers suggest the addition of several short writing assignments, of five to fifteen minutes, partly to give the students more experience in writing and partly to add variety to class procedure. Fourth, some of the teachers recommend the addition of work in creative writing (see p. 43 and p.67).

The designers of the program had rejected the idea of including lessons on creative writing, believing that training in expository writing is urgently needed by college-bound students, and further believing that creative writing is most effective in an elective course and difficult to justify in the required English program.

I. The language program met with various evaluations by the teachers, some finding it to be highly exciting and others regarding it as the least effective part of the program. More favorable comments appear than unfavorable ones, but it is difficult to arrive at an estimate about the success of this portion of the curriculum. Although the Carnegie program attempts to spell out the language lessons in more detail than almost any other area of the curriculum, some of the teachers felt that to present these lessons effectively a teacher needs to have a good bit of training in language study.

J. One aspect of the program raised a spectre that the Director considers to be a major threat to its success. This problem is most clearly stated on p. 33 of the Appendix, on which the teacher reports that although the students made more progress in the experimental course than they would have in the traditional program, nevertheless they received lower grades because the new course "made more demands on the students than previous English courses had" (p. 33). There is a fundamental error in logic here, which has the actual result of punishing a student for doing better work.

Unfortunately, this sort of thinking is not an isolated example. In the experience of the Director, it is a pattern adopted by all too many teachers who are introducing new curricula. Under the stimulus of a new and exciting curriculum teachers seem to expect that students will achieve far more than they have in the past; and, guided by this expectation, they raise their grade standards to some unreal height. Consequently, although students may be doing better than they ever have before, they are quite likely to receive fewer rewards than ever before. In the operation of the Carnegie Curriculum Study Center courses for able students, as well as in the Advanced Placement English courses introduced in the Pittsburgh area, the Director has found this tendency to grade students more stringently to be a constant problem. Parents have withdrawn students from excellent college-preparatory courses because they (quite accurately!) feared that their children's chances of college admission would be harmed by a poorer grade record.

If the new curricula are really teaching students more about the subject, then teachers should gladly reward the students with higher grades. Unless the trend to do precisely the reverse is halted, the new curricula will never win popular adoption in the schools.

Recommendations

The recommendations are incorporated in the text of the Findings above. For convenience they are reproduced in succint form in this section of the report.

1. The senior high school English curriculum designed at the Carnegie Curriculum Study Center may be taught effectively to average academic students, providing sensible modifications are observed.

2. It appears that the "average academic" class falls within an I.Q. range of 92 to 121; only classes with a median I.Q. of 108 or more are likely to have success with this curriculum.

3. Students who aspire to attend college are likely to respond favorably to this curriculum.

4. The average academic student has to be won to participate in the discovery process; he is inclined to resist the inductive method through a good bit of the first year he meets with it.

5. A teacher needs to employ a variety of class procedures, to hold the interest of the average academic student.

6. The teacher using this curriculum must expect to lead up to the major questions in each discussion session by introducing many minor questions as groundwork.

7. The three-year sequential curriculum should be used as a whole.

8. The teacher of this program should be above average in ability and knowledge.

9. For average academic students, the Carnegie Curriculum needs to be supplemented by a variety of audio-visual materials.

10. Some teachers recommended the addition of bibliographies listing pertinent scholarly and critical works that would be useful to the teacher. The Center did not do this, after consideration.

11. For average academic students, there is too much reading in the program; the teacher will need to delete works from various units in each course.

12. The composition units are useful, particularly those at the beginning of each year. However, more time than is scheduled must be devoted to composition. The teachers recommend that for average academic students work in spelling and mechanics be added to the planned curriculum.

13. Several short writing assignments might be added to the program, partly to give the students more practice and partly as a variety in class procedure.

14. Some teachers recommend the addition of work in creative writing. The Center does not recommend this addition.

15. Some teachers are critical of the language units; others feel that they are effective and interesting.

16. The Director of the program urges all teachers who use the curriculum not to apply more stringent grading standards than is customary in their school.

Conclusion

Although this project in its specifics is limited to the use of the English curriculum designed at the Carnegie Curriculum Study Center, many of its findings and recommendations have a much wider pertinence. Over the past decade many new and promising curricula have been developed and made available to the educational community. Teachers who hear about these developments have a natural inclination to try them in their classrooms, not only with students of brilliance but also with students of average academic ability.

The results of this project may stand as both an encouragement and a warning. There are exciting rewards in such a venture, and there are also pitfalls. Teachers should be aware of both. The following pages of the Appendix, which contains the full reports of the six teachers who participated in the program, are rich in details and experiences which give life to the abstract ideas contained in this Final Report.

APPENDIX TO THE FINAL REPORT

Complete Texts of the Reports of the Six Participating Teachers

Grade 10
Year 1964-1965

PROJECT ENGLISH TENTH-GRADE CURRICULUM STUDY: THE AVERAGE ACADEMIC STUDENT AND THE TEACHER WITHOUT SPECIAL PREPARATION

by

Maxine N. Brandenburg
August, 1965

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I. SUMMARY

This report represents a systematic attempt to examine what one classroom teacher has observed during the 1964-65 academic year while teaching the Project English tenth-grade curriculum to a class of average academic students. An evaluation of the appropriateness of the curriculum for these students indicat that the course can be effective for them provided certain modifications and changes are incorporated.

The experience of the author of this report suggests that this course can be used successfully by an experienced teacher who has had no special training to present it. However, the effectiveness of the materials for the teacher's use might be significantly improved through the inclusion of certain supplementary materials and a clarification of the teaching goals intrinsic in the design of the teaching materials.

II. INTRODUCTION

This report is designed to provide an evaluation of a particular phase of the Project English Curriculum* work carried out during the 1964-1965 academic year in cooperation with the Curriculum Study Center in English at Carnegie Institute of Technology. The report covers two areas. One area involves the appropriateness of the Project English tenth-grade course for the average academic student. The other area concerns the appropriateness of the Project English curriculum for use by an experienced teacher who had not received special training to present this program.

The report includes a section discussing background information and important assumptions essential in the evaluation. This will be followed by a discussion of the question: Is the Project English tenth-grade course appropriate for the average academic student? Then the report considers the question: Are the materials of the Project English tenth-grade curriculum in an adequate form to be used effectively by an experienced teacher who has had no special preparation to use them? In the final section of the paper, a conclusion discussing the significant problems and successes of the year's work and proposing specific recommendations regarding the project is presented. In addition, an appendix is included which contains specific materials such as comments on particular assignments and related lesson changes, plus information on student performance, specific teaching procedures, and supplementary teaching materials.

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*Throughout this report, the term "Project English Curriculum" designates the senior high school English Curriculum developed at the Curriculum Study Center in English at Carnegie Institute of Technology, 1962-1965. This Curriculum Study Center was funded by the U. S. Office of Education, originally under the "Project English" program. In Pittsburgh, the curriculum has been known popularly as the "Project English Curriculum."

III. BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND ASSUMPTIONS

Problems To Be Studied

The design of the Project English curriculum was well established when this study was undertaken. Since the course had been tested in classroom use during the previous years of work on the Project, this undertaking was concerned only to determine two matters: its appropriateness for average academic students and its appropriateness for teachers without special preparation.

The Class

The selection of the components for this study is significant, because all conclusions and recommendations evolving from the study are based on these components. Choice of the school rested with the City of Pittsburgh Board of Education, since the school to be selected was to be in the city school system. The Curriculum Study Center administrators indicated that the concern of the study was an average academic class; selection of the school was to take into consideration the objective of the study. The public school administration selected three schools which were also carrying the new Scholars Program. These were all schools considered average city schools, neither the most privileged nor most deprived in their economic and social environment. In addition, these schools had a sufficient number of academic students to provide a class appropriate for the project.

The school chosen for the tenth-grade curriculum in1964-1965 was Langley High School, with an enrollment in grades nine through twelve of about 1325 students. About thirty-five per cent of the pupils in the graduating class at twelfth-grade level pursue some form of higher education. The administrators who directly participated in the selection of the class were the principal and the guidance counselor.

Since it is generally the policy in the Pittsburgh city schools to have average classes composed of a mixture of academic and general students, it was decided, after consultation between the teacher and the principal, that an existing average English class would not be appropriate for this study. Rather, it was necessary to select the students specifically for this program and create a special class for this one section of tenth-grade English. Working within the limitations of scheduling conflicts and course requirements, a class was assembled which closely fit the model requested. An original group of thirty-four pupils (the maximum had been set as thirty-five, based on the number of texts available) was assembled. With the exception of two students, all members of the group were pursuing academic programs in preparation for higher education. This did not mean that all these students would actually attain this goal; however, the intent existed. Of the two non-academic students, one was dropped from the program because of lack of fundamental skills in reading and writing, and the other remained with the program and did satisfactory work, at times superior to that of certain of the academic students. The I. Q. scores, based on group tests administered in the ninth grade, showed a range of 92 to 125, with a median score of 110.

At the first meeting of the class, the group was given some orientation concerning the nature of the course and its development at the Carnegie Tech Curriculum Study Center. The students were specifically told that they had been chosen for this class and that it was the only one of its type in the school. This preparation was necessary, since it played an essential part in the motivation of the students. The response of the students to this information was favorable, because they were flattered to have been chosen. In spite of the positive attitude, it is significant that several of these students had little meaningful contact with serious academic study, not only at school but also at home.

The Teacher

The teachers selected for this phase of the Project English study were all experienced teachers who were enrolled in the graduate program at Carnegie Tech for the M. A. degree in English. They were expected to teach the curriculum as would any teacher without special preparation; however, they did have the opportunity to discuss the curriculum with Curriculum Study Center personnel at Carnegie Tech and at other participating high schools. My own qualifications included five years of teaching secondary school English plus working as a tutor of English and as an Adult Education teacher of English.

Assumptions

Any meaningful understanding of the report presented here requires certain assumptions and premises. This class is to be accepted as a representative average academic group. In addition, the teacher is assumed to be an experienced secondary school English teacher who has had no prior experience or association with the Project English course. Finally, the reader must recognize that this report represents a systematic attempt to examine what one classroom teacher has observed in the students, teachers, school, and other components of the school enrivonment during the academic year involved.

IV. APPROPRIATENESS OF THE PROJECT ENGLISH TENTH-GRADE COURSE FOR THE AVERAGE ACADEMIC STUDENT

Literature

The tenth-grade course covered three main areas of study: literature, composition, and language. Since this clear division of areas exists, it is most effective to evaluate the curriculum in terms of each of the separate areas. When considering the effectiveness of any course for a given group of students, the teacher must first clarify the objectives to be achieved. In the case of the literature material in this curriculum, I have established three basic objectives which should be fulfilled through the effective presentation of the materials. First, comprehension--the students should comprehend on the literal level what ideas the literature he has read expresses. Second, interpretation--the student should be able to interpret the ideas on terms of his own intellectual and social experience. Finally, appraisal--the student should begin to achieve some degree of competence in appraising what he has read, the introduction of critical evaluation. The approach which this curriculum prescribes stresses the inductive method of classroom instruction for teaching literature, with particular emphasis placed on the content of the literary work. The stress is placed entirely on the literary material itself and no special attention is given to background data concerning historical setting, author's involvement, etc., except where this information is introduced as part of the text. The great dependence on inductive teaching requires that the student both be familiar with the work being discussed and also be willing to express orally his ideas and comments.

Certainly one of the most significant questions regarding the literature sections of the curriculum is their appropriateness for this level of student. Many factors enter into an evaluation of this problem. It is important to consider the prior experience of these students in reading and studying literature, since exposure to adult, mature, thoughtful literary works was a relatively new experience for this class. In addition, consideration must be given to the order in which the selections are read. Considering the background of the students, it is important that the works introduced in the early weeks of the course fulfill three basic requirements:

(1) They should be significant works relevant to the overall objectives of the course.

(2) Their content matter should hold a high degree of interest for the students, relevant to their own experience.

(3) There should be a minimum of complex literary forms and techniques (for instance, stream-of-consciousness, paradox, satire).

An examination of the early readings in the course reveals several selections which for the average students would be more effective at a later time, particularly A TALE OF TWO CITIES. Since this is a major work, a lengthy novel to which considerable time is devoted, it would be far more meaningful to include it at a later point in the course when the students have achieved a higher degree of competence and sophistication in their reading. In spite of the elements of high interest, such as romance, adventure, secret identities, and intrigue, there are also the more complex features including Dickens' concern with human weakness and the frailty of man, as well as political and social commentary on eighteenth-century life.

In addition to the order in which the works are presented, another important fact in appraising the appropriateness of the selections is their relationship to life experience. For example, the class found the reading "The Stream of Days" difficult and uninteresting because they could not identify with the search for self-knowledge and independence experienced by the central figure in this autobiographical account. On the other hand, the autobiographical account presented by Albert Schweitzer in MEMOIRS OF CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH was received with general enthusiasm. His emphasis on childhood recollections, personal experiences, many with universal implications in the lives of most young people, certainly enhanced the attractiveness of his account to the average student.

One of the most striking failures of the year was also an autobiographical work, WIND, SAND AND STARS. It is certainly clear that success or failure of a particular literary selection cannot be linked to any specific literary form. Rather, it is necessary to look at the individual works involved. WIND, SAND AND STARS contained too much abstraction which the students could not relate to experience of actual life. This illustrates another characteristic which should be considered in judging the appropriateness of the works selected, the need for books to have the treatment of abstract ideas well-supported by concrete action or events.

A further evaluation of the literary selections can be gained through consideration of student performance as measured by several different methods. The classroom discussion, which was the primary teaching method for the literature, was significant in exposing the students' capacity to achieve the desired objectives in reading and studying the assigned literature. The variety in response which was demonstrated by the class illustrated the fact that certain works were far more effective than others. It is interesting to note that most of the readings in the Heroism unit were successful because they were built around a concept which was familiar to the students.

The evaluation resulting from an appraisal of the essays is similar to that resulting from class discussion. The main difference resulted from the fact that the essay was an evaluation which occurred after the student had been exposed to intensive classroom discussion of the literary work. As a result, the essay sometimes revealed a broader and more meaningful level of understanding than revealed in the classroom exchanges.

The short multiple-choice quizzes given on a particular night's reading assignment must be considered in any evaluation, but I feel their validity in relation to the question of the appropriateness of the selections is quite limited. More often, they simply reflected assignments not completed, hurriedly read, or at times, questions which were insignificant.

Student opinion concerning the literature selections was manifest through their oral comments in class, their general attitude toward the material, and finally, through the written evaluation sheets which each student completed at the end of the academic year. The conclusions reached through these activities closely parallel those reached by the teacher in her evaluation of student performance.

In general, the approach prescribed by the curriculum for teaching the literature units was successful. While the extensive discussion helped the students to formulate their own reactions and ideas and to exchange views with other members of the class, it was difficult to sustain the inductive approach for several consecutive days while studying certain longer literary works. The emphasis on the content of the literary work was excellent, since the student was less likely to have lost interest in the literature prior to the classroom discussion. The introduction of background information when required as an integral part of the text added to the validity of the reading experience rather than distracting from it, as is often the case when the author, historical background, and social context are dealt with as a preliminary subject prior to reading a selection.

The provisions in this curriculum for written evaluation of the reading is limited, since the classroom essays provide the only meaningful evaluation of the students' work. The quizzes served only the limited purpose of offering assurance to the teacher that the students had read a given night's assignment.

The postulated objectives as determined by this teacher were achieved with varying degrees of success, depending upon the literature selection involved. In general, the first objective of comprehension was reached by most of the class in all the readings. The ability of the class to interpret the selection varied with the assignment. Certainly this second skill showed marked improvement during the second half of the course when the students had more experience in reading mature selections. It was particularly interesting to note this development as well as that of critical evaluation, both relatively new goals for these students in their study of literature.

Based on the experience described above, there are certain recommended changes that I propose which would contribute to the effectiveness of the literature aspect of the curriculum for the average academic student. First, the approach of the curriculum is too limited in teaching techniques for this level of student. Five, six, and at times more days, with no other activity than inductive classroom teaching, is not effective. Varied classroom techniques could be added, such as short written exercises in which the student discusses a particular point of a reading assignment or variations on the discussion period with students raising questions prepared as a result of their reading assignments. In addition, there should be some type of written assignments on each major selection read in class, even if this assignment is only three or four sentences written in class, in ten or fifteen minutes. Without this activity, many students fail to formulate any kind of definitive comprehension, interpretation, or appraisal of the work read.

Composition

In appraising the appropriateness of the composition materials in the Project English curriculum for the average academic student, the teacher must formulate a set of objectives. For this particular class, I considered the objectives of the work in composition to be two-fold: first, to develop the capability to write an organized paragraph of relevant material related to a specific topic; and second, to achieve mastery of particular writing skills, including usage, expression, originality, etc.

The approach prescribed by the design of the curriculum included classroom lessons on particular characteristics of good composition, an analysis sheet used after completion of a writing assignment, and the writing of classroom essays mostly based on the literature read in class. In addition, limited provision was made for class discussion of student essays.

Any analysis of the appropriateness of the composition lessons and assignments must take into account a variety of factors. It is worthwhile to consider the previous writing experience of the students. Cumulative folders kept by the English department of the school revealed that the majority of students had done very little writing that was concerned with literary material they had read, other than the so-called "book report," which was generally a summary of the story. Other assignments included personal experiences or adventures, generally quite superficial in content. In addition to the rather limited subject matter of their earlier writing experience, the frequency of their writing was also limited, perhaps a paragraph or two every three or four weeks.

In the analysis of the composition materials presented in the course, it is important to consider the relevance of these materials to the stated objectives. Of particular value and significance are the lessons in composition which deal with the topic sentence, the distinction between relevant and irrelevant ideas, and the use of both general and specific details. In addition to these techniques of paragraph organization, the emphasis on comparison and contrast in the various written assignments is most helpful to the students in the development of the skill to relate similar and dissimilar ideas in a single, integrated composition.

The types of essay topics assigned in the materials were generally effective. However, certain topics were not suitable for an average academic class either because there had not been sufficient groundwork in preparation for them in the earlier lessons or because the topics themselves were too complex for this level of student. The emphasis on comparison and contrast in the choice of topics was excellent, because this enabled the students to reinforce a significant method of expressing ideas.

Student performance on the assigned subject was generally good, with the exception of those topics which did not seem appropriate. The students reacted very well to the composition lessons and to the task of actually writing their essays. The class enjoyed this work, particularly the idea of writing the compositions in class. In spite of requests to do the writing outside of class, the students on the whole did far better on the classroom essays, probably because many of them did not have the degree of self-discipline necessary to do an adequate piece of work on their own time.

The general approach prescribed by the curriculum was successful, because class lessons on writing, most of the essay topics, and the evaluation sheets all made a positive contribution to the achievement of the desired objectives. A consistent development of writing skills was readily observed in most of the students. It must be remembered that even writing a short paragraph concerning one quality of old Milon's character was in general a new experience for these students. A quick look at the titles of the themes written in their previous year's English class reinforces the validity of this assumption. Topics such as "A Good Time at the Ball Game," "An Exciting Vacation," or so-called "book reports" telling "What I Liked Best About This Study" are indicative of previous efforts by the students. In one year they had been asked to bridge the space between these topics and assignments such as "Compare the love of Cyrano for Roxanne with that of Don José for Carmen," or "Is the trait of miserliness so exaggerated in Harpagon tha we lose belief in the reality of his character" or "Find and illustrate three concept on which Schweitzer and Saint-Exupéry agree" or "Choose a character from THE PLAGUE and show how he seems to be undergoing a search for wisdom."

General recommendations for changes in the composition materials to make them more effective for the average academic student would include several points First, certain essay topics, such as the one given for THE ILIAD, are too comple because adequate groundwork has not been set. In addition, the questions sometimes fail to focus on the most meaningful material from the readings. For example, the Julius Caesar question can be more closely related to the concept of heroism. Since both of the preceding works are taught as part of a unit concerned with heroism and this topic is of great interest to the students, it would be more effective to capitalize on this high level of interest and to build a meaningful essay topic around it. In addition, a further expansion of the written work in the course is needed for the average academic student. This expansion could include occasional short classroom exercises of five minutes in which the student is asked to write a two- or three-sentence comment about a particular passage or chapter which has been read. This can be more meaningful than the five-question multiple-choice quiz and at the same time provide some needed variety in the classroom procedures. In addition, the sentences provide additional practice in the mechanic of sentence writing and expression of ideas plus the important additional writing experience needed by these students. Since the longer essays occur about once every two weeks, it is imperative that these students do some form of composition, if only a single sentence, at least twice a week in order to sustain the skills being developed. Third, because student participation tends to lag after three or four days of continual class discussion, it is necessary to devise some other techniques of classroom procedure.

Finally, more direct emphasis should be placed in the curriculum on classroom discussion of student essays when the corrected papers are returned to the student This is one of the most effective teaching devices available for relating constructive ideas concerning all aspects of writing good compositions. Since extensive corrections are needed in many papers written by these average students, such classroom evaluation of essays is particularly important.

Language

The inherent difficulty in formulating a set of objectives for teaching the materials provided in the design of the language units is fundamental in any analysis of the curriculum. The only relevant objectives which are apparent were achieving an introduction to a structural study of language and a recognition of linguistics as a distinct area of knowledge. The curriculum involves the use of nine distinct units, spaced throughout the school year, each requiring three to four days of classroom and homework time. Each unit includes explanatory material for the teacher to use in presenting the content matter to the students, discussion material and demonstration sentences for class use, worksheets to be done in class and as homework, and a test on each unit. The subject matter of these various lessons is concerned with selected areas of study and uses a limited amount of material in relation to the large area of knowledge known as structural linguistics. There is no intention in the design of the materials to give a comprehensive view of structural linguistics; rather, the emphasis is on selected example

In evaluating the appropriateness of these materials for the average academic student, first consideration must be the previous language experience and study of the students. The classroom association with language experienced by these students has been a traditional grammar text book, the daily drill, and repetitious written exercises. In view of this background, the student is facing a new and radically different approach when he encounters this introduction to a structural view of language study. The selection of the material for this study does not appear to be particularly systematic in its organization or character. The materials which have been selected follow several distinct topics, some of which are related and others of which are not. The materials on form classes and structure signal words are closely related. The information on inflection on the other hand, is introduced with no prior relationship in the material. The organization of the material is equally ambigious. The initial lessons are well organized and integrated. Later lessons do not follow the same well-defined pattern.

The level of detail presented in these lessons is a significant factor in any analysis of the appropriateness of the materials. Most of the lessons are quite superficial in their approach to the information and concepts presented. These lessons are definitely selective rather than being any kind of an intensive study in depth. Student performance was also varied in these units. The early units were quite successful as measured by classroom discussion, the practice exercises, and the tests. By the same criteria, the later lessons were not as effective. The students generally found the new approach refreshing, but they would have been even more satisfied if the selection and organization of materials had emphasized more depth of the subjects presented.

The general approach prescribed by the curriculum met with limited success. Certainly there was not a constant, sustained level of performance by the students throughout the year; and rather than observing a progression of improvement, the teacher observed a progression of disinterest and lack of enthusiasm for the materials both as a result of the students' lack of foundation and as a consequence of the isolated content selection of certain lessons.

Changes undertaken for these linguistic materials should include fewer topics, developed more fully; and a greater emphasis should be placed on certain other underlying characteristics of language.

Advantages of the Curriculum

The three distinct but integrated areas of the tenth grade curriculum--literature, composition, and language--share certain common attributes. All three introduce the student to distinct areas of academic endeavor, and also employ new techniques for learning and study. The emphasis on the inductive method pervade all three areas and heightens the effectiveness of them. The significance of original thinking--conceiving an idea and then expressing it, either in a verbal or oral form--is reinforced throughout the course. An interest in creative thinking, intellectual pursuit, and new areas of knowledge is enhanced by the materials presented.

Problems Presented by the Curriculum

The specific problems in this curriculum which need to be solved in any attempt to use these materials for a broad base of average academic students include the length of the reading assignments, more detailed class discussion of specific facts and sequence of events, more explanation of levels of meaning, more precise and varied approach to teaching the recognition and appreciation of literary devices, more emphasis on analogy in the discussion, more variety in the classroom procedure when studying literature, modification and change of certain of the composition titles assigned, further clarifiaction of certain linguistic materials, additional quizzes on certain readings, and the addition of other short written exercises.

The common problems shared by the three areas for the average academic student are basically inherent in the design of the curriculum--a design intended for the above-average academic student. The average academic student differs from the above-average not only in ability but also in prior academic experience and breadth of knowledge. In all of the areas of the course, assumptions are made regarding the students' knowledge as a result of prior academic background. In many situations the students lacked this assumed requisite knowledge, including scope of reading experience, understanding of language terms, and familiarity with composition form.

Evaluation

A general evaluation of the appropriateness of the tenth-grade Project English curriculum for the average academic student indicates that the concepts, design, and purpose are effective with this particular level of student. However, certain modifications and changes are needed to achieve the maximum effectiveness. The high degree to which the implementation of the postulated goals was achieved demonstrates the potential attributes of this particular design for the average academic student.

V. APPROPRIATENESS OF THE PROJECT ENGLISH TENTH-GRADE CURRICULUM FOR THE TEACHER WITHOUT SPECIAL PREPARATION

The second phase of the year's study was concerned with an evaluation of the appropriateness of the tenth-grade curriculum materials for use by a high-school English teacher, who has had no prior association or experience with the Project English curriculum, and a teacher responsible for a full teaching load of five classes daily with normal total enrollment.

In determining the appropriateness of the curriculum for use by such a teacher several criteria must be considered. Included are content materials, organizatio preparation requirements, and effective means of testing and evaluation. An examination of the three major areas of the curriculum will include an analysis of the curriculum in relationship to these criteria.

Literature

The effective use of the literature materials by the teacher first requires that the teacher be familirr with the content. In this tenth-grade course, the focus is placed on world literature, drawing on a variety of literary forms including poetry, novels, plays, short stories, biography, autobiography, and Biblical readings. The variety in both subject matter and literary form offers an interesting challenge. The readings for the six units are theme-oriented.

Because the emphasis in these units is placed on inductive teaching, the materials provided for the teacher are intended to enhance and strengthen the teacher' ability to use this technique. The teacher is given a set of basic questions for each reading assignment. These questions are intended as a guide rather than as the total analysis of the material covered in the assignment. The real success o failure of the questions depends upon the individual teacher and his capacity to provide the meaningful additional questions which expand and clarify the subject being discussed.

The teacher is provided with a short list of suggested audio-visual aid materials, but this list is limited. There is no real attempt to incorporate these materials within the basic design of the curriculum. Lack of supplemental materials in the curriculum poses several problems for the teacher. It must be remembered that the time demands on the teacher presenting this course to his class is great, and he will have limited time for selecting, organizing, and planning the use of supplemental materials, materials which are useful and effectiv with average students.

Finally, the materials of the curriculum include reading quizzes which are to be used as a quick classroom check on the previous night's homework assignment. The five-item, multiple-choice quiz is "easy" for the teacher because little time or effort is required in grading them. However, their validity as a means of measuring the knowledge obtained by the students from reading the required assignment is limited. The questions stress factual detail and do not evaluate beyond the assessment of the students' ability for remembering specific details or facts. While the quizzes are limited in scope and value, they do provide the teacher with some measure of which students had completed the reading assignments.

The organization of the materials in the literature section of the curriculum groups the readings in seven areas. The grouping of literature according to theme is particularly valid in an introductory course stressing world literature where classification by chronology, by national origin, or by literary genre would not be meaningful. The introductory unit (the readings covered in the curriculum during the first five or six days of class meetings) emphasizes four basic concerns in the study of literature: characterization, plot, setting, and theme. The selections are short stories, which can be read in a single night. These readings are followed by the first topical unit, Social Concerns, the initial work being A TALE OF TWO CITIES. The other units emphasize the thematic concerns of Love, Reality and Illusion, Heroism, Human Weakness, and The Search for Wisdom.

The classroom procedures set forth in the literature section of the curriculum are limited, with greatest emphasis on one particular procedure, the method of inductive questioning by the teacher. Two consecutive days limited to only inductive classroom discussion are effective, but four, five, and six days of the identical procedures imposes a great burden on the teacher in working with the average students, both in terms of sustaining student interest and in evaluating student performance, since in an average class there are generally several nonparticipants in the class discussion. In addition to the class discussion, the only other regular procedure in the literature lesson plans were the objective quizzes, which required less than five minutes of class time and therefore did not provide a significant variation in the classroom procedure.

Considering the volume of the literature included in the curriculum,it is obvious that considerable time is required for the teacher to prepare the materials for presentation to his class. In addition, because world literature is the general subject of the course and includes such a wide variety of reading, the teacher will often be teaching works about which he has limited knowledge, thus requiring more extensive preparation. This is not a limitation, but rather a unique advantage of this curriculum, since the stimulation and challenge of a new intellectual experience can serve as a motivating force for the classroom teacher.

The testing and evaluation techniques in the literature section of the curricul are limited. The only regular daily procedure that can be evaluated is the student participation in the classroom discussion. The number of students willing participate varies as does the ability of the students to effectively articulate ide within the framework of a group situation. The regular reading quizzes availab for about 2/3 of the reading assignments provide some limited measure of the thoroughness of the student's factual reading of his homework, but the quizzes c not aid the teacher in appraising the student's comprehension of significant idea

Finally, the essays, which are part of both the composition and the literatur sections of the course, do enable the student to express his ideas and interpretations relevant to the literature read. Essays are written about a limited number of topics, so that the teacher is not able to evaluate student performance an understanding of a great number of the literary works read.

The advantages of this literature curriculum for the teacher are numerous. First, it offers an opportunity to teach a wide range of mature, thoughtful liter works. In addition, the works have been systematically selected and organized and significant discussion questions have been prepared to aid the teacher in th effective communication of the contents. Also, provision is made for the writi of short essays on topics related to the literature read by the students. Finally the emphasis on the inductive method of teaching presents a valuable challenge for the classroom teacher to employ this pedagogical method effectively.

Several general recommendations for change in the literature section of the tenth-grade Project English curriculum are suggested to enhance the appropriateness of the materials for use by teachers without special preparation. Mor detailed and systematic incorporation of audio-visual aids and other supplementary materials should be included in the curriculum. Provision for more varie in classroom procedures is needed, including additional written assignments by the students which at the same time would provide additional evaluation materia for the teacher in his appraisal of student work. Suggested bibliographical mat rials to aid the teacher in his own preparation of the literature for presentation the class should be included in the course. Introductory comments discussing t inductive method of teaching, outlining its attributes, and containing some suggestions to help the teacher in the implementation of this method would strength the effectiveness of the overall approach.

It would be valuable to include suggestions for aiding the teacher in presenti the Bible as literature, often a new experience for the average teacher and one which can present problems if the teacher has not been prepared. Although ma of the Biblical readings are well-chosen and the questions meaningful, the over presentation in the curriculum is not too helpful for the average teacher who ha thought of the Bible only as a religious instrument and not as a great literary w

It is inevitable that the students will have questions concerning the Biblical selections, questions which confuse the notion of divine word with literary achievement. These questions can generally be answered effectively provided the teacher involved has been oriented through adequate background and preparation.

Composition

The teacher is given a set of specific composition lessons which clearly describe basic writing skills. In addition, a set of model themes is provided, both to aid him in teaching the materials to the students and also to serve as a guide in evaluating the papers which the students write. A set of essay topics is provided to correspond to the literature units, and certain composition lessons are planned which are directly related to the literature read by the class.

The composition materials are organized so that they are spaced throughout the year, although the specific class lessons in composition writing are mostly contained in the early part of the curriculum. The topics assigned for the compositions gradually become more complex in nature as the year progresses. Early in the curriculum, class discussion of graded essays is mentioned, but as the course progresses, no specific provision is made for this activity, which is an important tool for the teacher of composition.

The preparation requirements for teaching the composition materials are minimal. The specific lessons for teaching particular composition skills can be mastered in less than thirty minutes. Classroom discussion of graded themes does require additional preparation by the teacher if this teaching technique is to be used effectively, including such materials as dittoed examples of writing from students' papers. The major preparation requirement for the teacher is the correction and evaluation of the writing done by the students. Since all the evaluation of composition is subjective by nature, the teacher needs specific guides and objectives to provide a sound basis for his critical judgment of student writing.

The advantages of the composition materials for the teacher include the availability of well-planned lessons on composition, a collection of meaningful topics related to the literature, which are used as the subject of the class essays written by the students, and a set of model essays to use as a guide for evaluating student writing. By using these materials, the teacher is freed from the time-consuming activities of structuring lesson plans and originating essay topics. As a result, he has more time to devote to the most important aspect of composition teaching, the careful and thoughtful reading and evaluation of student writing.

The recommendations for changes in the composition materials which would aid in the effectiveness of these lessons for the teacher include additional sets of model themes, inclusion of more lessons related to specific skills employed in writing compositions, and specific provision in the lesson plans for class discussion and appraisal of completed writing assignments. In addition, the inclusion of a number of short written assignments related to the reading, assignments to be completed in ten or fifteen minutes of class time, would provide further writin experience (the present form of the curriculum provides for a composition to be written every ten or twelve days), and also would provide the teacher with another measure of student's performance both in writing and in understanding the literature assignments, since the literature would be the logical topic for these short written exercises.

Language

The basic concern of the language units in the tenth-grade curriculum is an introduction to the structural approach to grammar and the study of language. The contents are organized into nine separate yet related units of study, each unit requiring three or four days of consecutive class time. The materials provided for the teacher include daily lesson plans accompanied by some explanatory information to aid the teacher in his presentation of the contents, practice or exercise sheets for use by the students to aid in their learning of a particular lesson, a test for each lesson to be administered to the students at the conclusion of the prescribed three or four days of study for the topic.

Each lesson is concerned with a particular language characteristic, including Form Classes, Signal Words, Sentence Patterns, Modification, Variation, Compounding, and Case and Case Inflection. Most of the lessons depend upon the preceding lessons, although there is not always a direct relationship between the current topic and the content of the completed lessons.

For the teacher who has had no previous experience in teaching a structural approach to linguistics, the preparation requirements include not only the materials for the specific lessons being taught, but also a basic study of the structural view of language so that the teaching is being done with a broad understanding of the purpose of the approach.

Testing and evaluation techniques provided in the language units include classroom discussion, competence in completing the assigned work sheets, and performance on the tests given at the conclusion of each unit.

The advantages of this curriculum for the teacher include the opportunity to teach a new concept of language and the intellectual and professional challenge intrinsic in such an undertaking. At the same time, the teacher has the opportunity to stimulate interest in language study through this departure from the traditional approach to the subject and as a result achieve the highly desired goal of increased student understanding of the complexity and stimulation of linguistic studies.

In order to maximize the effectiveness of this curriculum for the teacher, certain general changes are recommended. The fundamental problem which pervades the language units is the lack of a definite set of general goals which are to be achieved as a result of using the materials. It is important to remember that not only is the concept of structural language study new to the students, but it is also a new idea for most English teachers. In order to increase the overall effectiveness of these materials, it is necessary that the teacher be given a cleare idea of what the purpose of this approach is and why it is desirable to use it rather than some traditional method. In my own case, I had completed some graduate work in linguistics and was also taking a graduate course in the subject at the sam time I was teaching the Project English curriculum. The teacher without this background would find himself faced with a difficult intellectual task in attempting to teach some of these lessons without further explanatory materials.

Most secondary-school English teachers treat any approach to grammar other than the traditional one as suspect. In light of this prevalent attitude, it is unrealistic to expect the average teacher to pick up these materials without any orientation or explanation in a professional or intellectual context and proceed to teach in an effective and meaningful way.

Advantages of the Curriculum for the Teacher

In all three areas of the Project English tenth-grade curriculum, the teacher is presented with an opportunity to teach significant, interesting, intellectually stimulating material. The opportunity for innovation in both subject matter and teaching methods is readily available to the teacher. At the same time, the instructor is provided with an integrated, well-planned course of study for an entire academi year, a course which includes appropriate materials for classroom presentation, homework assignments, and evaluation of student performances.

Problems Presented by the Curriculum for the Teacher

The teacher faces several problems in working with this curriculum. First, the time required to adequately prepare the literature lesson and correct the written assignments is demanding. In addition, the course does not provide enough variety in classroom procedure due to the extensive use of inductive teaching as well as to the lack of supplemental materials including audio-visual aids. Finally, the teacher must be able to impose sufficient self-discipline on himself so that he has a truly open mind in approaching the entire concept of a new curriculum whic incorporates innovations in both content and method.

Evaluation

For the teacher who is stimulated by a challenging opportunity to teach interesting and stimulating material to his students, this curriculum can be highly effective. Above all, the effectiveness of this curriculum requires a teacher w is himself enthusiastic about presenting an intensive range of readings in World Literature, a comprehensive program in composition writing, and a relatively new approach to the study of language. A teacher who has a sincere enthusiasm for this kind of endeavor can make Project English a meaningful and exciting experience for his students.

VI. CONCLUSION

The Project English tenth-grade curriculum has many qualities of content, organization, and method which can be effectively used for the average academic student and can be successfully used by the teacher who does not have special preparation. Although certain modifications, additions, and changes have been recommended, the basic plan of the curriculum can serve the goals and needs of both the average academic student and the teacher.

The advantages in concept, design, and purpose of the curriculum outweigh its limitations. These limitations have resulted in some general recommendations for changes in the design of the program. Included in these suggested changes are more variety in teaching techniques, addition of bibliographical material, provisions for additional model themes, increase in written work, more emphasis on evaluation of student writing, inclusion of general objectives for the language study incorporation of audio-visual materials in the curriculum, and evaluation of effectiveness of certain literary works.

The innovations in structure, content, and form are all attributes of this curriculum for use with average academic students. Concurrently, the planning, organization, intellectual level, and scope of the curriculum contribute to the effectiveness of this curriculum when used by a teacher who does not have special preparation.

VII. APPENDIX

Appropriateness of Certain Literature Selections

A wide variety of response to the literary works presented in this course, ranging from highly successful to lack of interest, was demonstrated by the students. Throughout the course, and particularly during the first few months, the class was responsive to the short stories. The unity, conciseness, and simplicity of structure all contributed to the effectiveness of this particular form of literature. The first selection read, "Old Milon," was received very well through excellent class participation. On the other hand, "The Bet" did not go well; while the class achieved a superficial understanding, only a few students comprehended the depth of the meaning with the result that the response to inductive questioning was poor. The short stories included in the units on Heroism and Human Weakness were generally quite successful.

ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT was received well and read carefully. "A Child's Christmas in Wales" was the most effective poetic work; the students' response to the vivid imagery aided them in reading other works. The response to CARMEN was interesting because many of the students enjoyed reading the story, but they didn't respond to it with any depth of perception in the classroom. This was primarily due to their inability to grasp the concept of passionate, sensual, violent love--an emotion too far from their own experience. On the other hand, CYRANO DE BERGERAC evoked general enthusiasm with its romance, pathos, and humor. The lack of success of a particular work was due to many reasons. For example, "Maya" was not as successful as I had hoped it would be because the students had a lack of knowledge concerning modern Russia and the social changes effected by the Communist revolution. Therefore, it was difficult for them to understand the difference between the view of the world held by Maya and that held by Uncle Adrian.

Additional Writing Assignments

These topics would be assigned in class and the students would spend only ten or fifteen minutes writing a brief answer of a few sentences. Examples of additional writing assignments which were used with the class in this study included:

MEMOIRS OF CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH: Write a few sentences explaining what Schweitzer means by idealism.

THE PLAGUE: Why does Father Paneloux believe that "it's logical for a priest to call in a doctor"?

JULIUS CAESAR: What are some heroic qualities of Mark Antony?

THE ILIAD: Why did Achilles finally return to battle?

These additional writing assignments were included in the classroom teaching for three purposes: first, to provide variation in the daily discussion period; second, to enable the student to have additional opportunity for writing; third, to give the teacher an additional measure of the student comprehension of the works being read currently. When the class had been working on a longer book, such as A TALE OF TWO CITIES or THE PLAGUE, student participation tanded to lag after three or four days of continual class discussion. It was necessary to devise some other techniques for use of class time; the result was a brief written exercise.

Changes in Essay Topics

Certain essay topics were not suitable for an average academic class either because there had not been sufficient preparation in the earlier lessons or because the topics themselves were too complex for this level of student. For example, the topic given for THE ILIAD is: "Richards says in his Introduction that the characters in THE ILIAD are more than life size. Choose one character from the book and show that this is true for him." Even with adequate discussion in the preceding days (five according to the curriculum, although I actually used six and a half), this was not an effective question. Since the book was read as part of a unit concerned with heroism and this topic was interesting to the students, it would have been more meaningful to have capitalized on this high level of interest and designed an essay topic related to heroism.

Variation in Classroom Procedures

Additional classroom teaching procedures are needed in working with average academic students. Two possible approaches which could be used in conjunction with inductive teaching include allowing five minutes for the class to skim a chapter (after having read it the previous night) followed by fifteen minutes of discussion. This often resulted in wider participation by the class. A second technique involved having the class use open books for five or ten minutes to prepare themselves for two or three discussion questions provided by the teacher. *

Length of Assignments

Because the exposure to adult, thought-provoking literary works was a relatively new experience, the students often had difficulty completing certain reading

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*Note by Editor: The curriculum plans intend that the students normally have their books open during the whole of every discussion period. Some misunderstanding of the suggested technique seems to have occurred.

assignments in the one night allotted. In response to this problem, it was sometimes necessary to shorten assignments and to devote additional homework nights to the reading of certain works, such as A TALE OF TWO CITIES.

Using Biblical Literature

In considering the material used in the World Literature sections, it is of interest to note that several Biblical readings have been included. In view of recent Supreme Court rulings as well as the intellectual concern with moral issue, it is particularly relevant that the Bible be taught as literature. It is effective to use these Biblical selections in conjunction with other types of literature which illustrate the same or similar themes in different ways. When Biblical readings are treated as a separate unit, unrelated to other literature which has been studie their real literary value is often missed. The great benefit of integrating the Biblical selections with other works in a unified plan of study is that it enables the student to see the universality of literary themes from the Bible up to a modern writer such as Albert Camus.

A particular attribute of the Biblical selections for the average students is that Biblical readings are among the few literary works throughout the year with which the students have a feeling of familiarity. Because the material is familiar, the result is often greater insight into themes and ideas encountered in other work and also a greater sense of ease and confidence in the discussion of the ideas. Furthermore, there is a significant learning experience to be gained from the exposure to these works in their broad literary context, illustrating to the student that even sacred literature can be read on more than one level of meaning. This does not disrupt or challenge conventional religious interpretations but rather add the additional dimension of the critical literary view.

Emphasis of Language Lessons

Among the materials which have been prepared for the language study, the introductory lessons are highly effective. The work related to form classes and structure signal words not only demonstrates significant concepts of language structure, but are also materials which have a high level of appeal for the student Using a nonsense passage is an appealing device for demonstrating that the functio is evolved from the relationship of the word to other words with which it appears in a sentence. Furthermore, the introduction of the concept that language "is an arbitrary set of symbols for the purpose of communication" is an idea which can have great significance for the student in his further study of language.

In the lesson provided for day II of Lesson I when the student is introduced to the idea of word classes, the teacher's instruction sheet refers to the term inflectional endings but does not stress this terminology as part of the lesson. Since in a later lesson on verbs the same concept is again introduced, it would be more efficient and a more worthwhile teaching approach to introduce the students to the term "inflectional endings" at this early point in the study. Since it is a common and widely used term in any discussion of structural grammar, it is meaningful that the student be given a more comprehensive understanding of the term.

Grade 11
Year 1964-65

PROJECT ENGLISH ELEVENTH-GRADE CURRICULUM STUDY:
THE AVERAGE ACADEMIC STUDENT AND THE TEACHER WITHOUT SPECIAL PREPARATION

by

Patricia P. Sellars
August, 1965

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I. INTRODUCTION

This report records something of the experience and reactions of one teacher who participated in a one-year experiment teaching eleventh-grade Project English to a class of thirty-two students (75% average-academic; 25% average-commercial) at Perry High School, in the Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania public school system, during the school year of 1964-1965.

The Pittsburgh Project English program was conceived as a tenth-throug twelfth grade sequential program designed for above-average college-bound students. The purpose of the experiment was to present this 172-day program to a group of average-ability college-bound students, and consequentl to make recommendations for modifications of the course in order to make more useful to average-academic students, *i. e.*, to those who have plans t attend college but who fall somewhat below the upper one-fifth of their class

The United States Office of Education contracted for the experiment, which was directed by the Curriculum Study Center at Carnegie Institute of Technology.

The experiment was interesting and surely at least moderately successfu here is one teacher's description of it, an evaluation of its achievement, and recommendations for its further application.

II. GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

History of Project English

The three-year program of the Project was developed by the Carnegie Tech Curriculum Study Center 1962-1965 for presentation to the upper 20% of academic students. Reports upon the Project as taught to that talented portion have indicated generally excellent results.

The Project Method

Reports and outlines of the development of the Project, its curriculum outlines and lesson plans, are available from the Center. Briefly, the aim of the whole Project is to give the best students the opportunity and encouragement to make the most of their potentials in literature, language, and composition.

The eleventh-grade course concentrates upon various aspects of the American character as revealed in the nation's literature. The first unit is titled "The American Puritan Attitude," and it includes readings like Arthur Miller's THE CRUCIBLE and Nathaniel Hawthorne's THE SCARLET LETTER, and also includes the study of the functions and patterns of the English language. Unit II is "The American Desire for Success," with such readings as THE RISE OF SILAS LAPHAM, ALL MY SONS, and THE GREAT GATSBY, and further study of language and meaning. Unit III is "The American Idealism" including works by Emerson, Thoreau, and O PIONEERS! Unit IV is "The American Darker Spirit" including MOBY DICK and THE GLASS MENAGERIE. Unit V is "The American Dream Reconsidered" including THE ADVENTURES OF HUCKLEBERRY FINN, WINTERSET, and BABBITT. The last unit, Unit VI, is "The Modern American Quest for Identity." THE HAIRY APE, THE RED BADGE OF COURAGE, And THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA are some of the selections here. No "testing" is done as such, except for brief quizzes to check on whether the students have done their assigned reading. In the case of the present experiment, a year-end test required by the Pittsburgh Board of Education, made up by the teacher, (on which the students did reasonably well), was the only exception. The teachers evaluate the students' quiz grades, discussion contributions, and compositions, done both in and out of class--about eight compositions per semester. The program naturally makes room for the teaching and discussion of composition.

A central feature of the method is its use of the inductive process in the discussion of literature and idea. Approaching a work of literature, the teacher begins his preparation by absorbing the points of major emphasis about that work as specified in the plan; then his lesson plan consists of a series of questions, many of them suggested in the outline, and designed to draw from the students their own responses to the work and thereby to lead them to an understanding of those major points, without the teacher's having dictated those points to the class. The teacher of course must be prepared to improvise in dealing with the students' tentative answers and to ask further questions that lead to exploration of the meaning of the original question. This is of course an application of the "Socratic method."

III. THE ORGANIZATION OF THE PRESENT EXPERIMENT

Uniil 1964, the Project English course was developed and dealt with as a program for the able academic high school students. The present experiment has been designed to test the potentialities of the program for the ordinary student in the academic program. It was hoped that the general effectiveness of the program for such students could be tested and that recommendations could be made for any necessary adaptations of the program to meet the needs of such students. Educators at the Carnegie Tech Curriculum Study Center thought that perhaps an adaptation of the course, even if watered down, might be better for the ordinary academic high school student than present conventional alternatives. The results of this experiment generally support this theory.

With the cooperation of the Pittsburgh Board of Education, one class each of tenth-, eleventh-, and twelfth-grade students was established in Pittsburgh city schools--each class at a different school--for the academic year of 1964-1965. The teachers devoted half their time to this course, and the other half taking courses in the Carnegie Tech graduate program in English. The present writer, a liberal arts graduate of the University of Pittsburgh with an English major and one year of teaching regular English in a public school, taught the eleventh-grade Project English class at Perry High School.

The students were chosen by the Perry High School administration with the understanding that they were to constitute an "average-academic" class. Thirty-two were chosen; 75% academic and 25% commercial. Further background of the students is discussed in more detail below.

The class met for a forty-five minute period, five days a week for the thirty-eight week year.

IV. THE BACKGROUND OF THE STUDENTS

Perry High School draws its students from an area of the city that cannot be rated any higher than middle-to-lower class. Of the 32 students in the experimental group, about 80% came from "blue collar" families, 20% from "white collar" families.

The students' I. Q. scores ranged from 93 to 128, with both the median and the average falling at 113. Just how important a role I. Q. scores played in the students' performance in the program, compared to their reading comprehension ability and their initiative or industry, is not certainly known. One refrains from giving I. Q. scores priority when selecting candidates because of reasons like the following: a student with an I. Q. of 112 continually showed far greater perception in oral and written discussion of literature than a student with an I. Q. of 126; a student with an I. Q. of 101 continually showed greater comprehension of the work than a student with an I. Q. of 122. One is aware of a "willingness to work hard" variable, yet while industriousness explains why a student with an I. Q. of 95 earned a B, it does not apply to the other two examples. What might explain the differences is reading comprehension ability. Unfortunately, recent reading comprehension scores for the majority of the 32 students in the experiment were either unavailable or non-existent. The only paragraph comprehension scores found were those recorded when the students were at the eighth-grade level.

Also, as mentioned earlier, it turned out that only 75% of the students selected for the course were enrolled in the academic program; 25% were enrolled in the commercial program. Of the total, only 50% planned to enter college; 15% hoped to enter junior college; 10% to go to trade school; 10% to go to business cchool; and 15% to enter the job market immediately upon high school graduation. Thus there may be some question as to whether an "average-academic" group was actually chosen.

Previous to eleventh grade, the 32 students in the experimental class had spent their time allotted to English in traditional English courses, utilizing the time with a traditional literature textbook--reading a novel only for a book report and never discussing a novel in class, and studying traditional grammar. While several had had the good fortune to study a couple of plays and some classic short stories, the resulting discussions had been limited, giving the student no clear concept of the quality of the literature. Because of the work load of English teachers, themes written had been limited in number and length. One research paper had been written by some of the students, but written in the sense of reporting rather than in a literary-critical sense. The criteria for most of the previous compositions assigned to these students had not been analytical, and had demanded no challenging questioning on the part of the student. Of course, there were a few exceptions to this tendency, but more because of the student than the type of English course. The students were hazy as to how to organize a theme and what to look for in a literary work.

One obvious fact of importance to the experiment was that the students had had no opportunity to take the tenth-grade Project course. The eleventh-grade course would have been significantly easier for them, and more could have been accomplished if the students had had the tenth-grade course or some experience with the inductive approach. Since one out-standing feature of the program (other than its felxibility) is that it is written sequentially and that there are interrelationships within the three-year program, it stands to reason that the tenth-grade course prepares the student for the eleventh grade, and so on. Valuable time was lost when several days were spent on a language section of linguistics which would have taken only a couple of days' review if the students had had the tenth-grade background in Project English. To cover the quantity of literature, composition, and language lessons--and to do each one justice--was enough of a race, but lack of experiencing inductive teaching before made it impossible. The greatest contribution this program makes is as a whole: a student can have an orderly sequence of English, a related program throughout tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grades.

V. STUDENT REACTIONS TO THE COURSE

The students felt both excitement and apprehension when entering the program for the first time. Being part of an "experiment" was an immediate, obvious attraction for them; being told it was "their class" and that they would be given the chance to express their views in class (rather than being lectured to) and to discover what are some of the important questions to ask about literature and to start looking for answers to these questions was a new experience for them. They were obviously aware of the difference between the Project course and previous conventional courses in rote learning.

This pleasure did not last throughout the course unqualified, however. At one time or another almost every student expressed the feeling of being overwhelmed by the amount of reading which the course required. Another common difficulty was incoherence and inconclusiveness in replies to questions about certain works, a difficulty obviously aggravated by the students' lack of experience in discovering general concepts from the details of literary works. The compositions, while the students were in general enthusiastic about them, also caused some problems: many students were handicapped by the lack of, or their failure to profit from, previous training in the mechanics of language --one girl in particular showed admirable perception of ideas expressed in literary works but made little progress in correcting such basic language errors as sentence fragments and run-on sentences and misspelling. Also, while the students showed enthusiasm and made progress in learning the elementary organizing principles of their papers--use of precise topic statement, grouping of supporting details, use of closing statement--they became rather mechanical in the performance of this pattern, and several were unable to develop much feeling for varying or heightening it. (See the appendix for a listing of various student comments upon the course.)

VI. GRADE RESULTS; CONCLUSIONS ABOUT STUDENT BACKGROUND

It is impossible not to feel that every student in the class was enriched to some degree by the experience of the course, if only because of the large amount of good reading required. Naturally, degrees of enrichment varied individually; but educators in English should never forget, regardless of grade levels and Project English-or-no-Project English issues, that good reading can hardly fail to do more for the general broadening and deepening of student experience than mediocre or deliberately watered-down reading selections.

In the experimental group, the students' previous grade records in English (and in other academic subjects) wavered between B's and C's, with four of the 32 students making A's in English. In the Project, only one of the four previous A students maintained the A. In the Project, 16 students lowered their grade one notch; 10 students made the same grade; and five students improved one notch.

In cases where grades were lower in the Project than they had been in regular English, one could recognize two causes: either the student had been given his previously higher grade because he was a "nice, quiet, cooperative student who did all the assignments" but had not been expected to articulate in class or be perceptive on paper, or the student found the work much more demanding in the Project than it had been in regular English. One girl, whose I. Q. was far below the class median, and who was an habitually diligent worker, had obviously received her previously higher English grade not only because of her industry, but because of her ability for rote learning. In the Project, however, she was handicapped, as were many students, because of no experience in conceptualizing. In only one case did a student receive a lower grade in the Project course than he had in previous English courses because of indolence. In cases where grades rose in the Project, one could only conclude that the previous English courses had failed to get the student involved or interested, and consequently overlooked his perceptive and analytical powers. Because the Project made more demands on the students than previous English courses had, one cannot infer that the fact that some grades stayed the same implies no more progress was made in the Project than there would have been in regular English. *

As stated earlier, the students selected for the course by the Perry High School administrators were only about 50% definitely college-bound and only 75% enrolled in the academic program. In a way this mixed selection was almost an advantage: it gave an opportunity to observe the effects of the course upon students with different kinds of aims, and to observe the effects of student family background and family attitudes toward higher education upon student motivation and performance in the course. The sharpest perception in the class belonged to a girl in the commercial program who had no higher education plans than business school, and she was even uncertain about that. Although the instructor encouraged her to go to college and offered to inquire about possible financial aid, she declined, saying because she was not in the academic program she did not have the math, science, and language requirements needed for entrance to most colleges, and also that her parents felt a job was more important than a college education for a girl. Placing secretarial-type jobs before college, emphasis on business school rather than on a liberal arts school was the prevalent attitude of the majority of girls in the class, who also had been influenced by their parents. Two boys in the class, one with an I. Q. of 127, one with an I. Q. of 138, had no college plans of their own, nor did their parents have any for them, although these boys were enrolled in the academic program.

But the lack of such plans for the future did not lead such students to feel that they were wasting time in the course, did not lead to indolence in their performances or of their enjoyment. Thus, because these intelligent students perhaps will never get to college, one tends to rejoice that they at least had the Project English course. It also forces one to consider carefully--even if it is a minor consideration--the admission of bright commercial students to this program designed principally for college-bound students. Admittedly, however, the Project English program usually offers more value to those students who will go on to college.

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* [Editor's Note: The Director of the Carnegie Curriculum Study Center does not agree with this philosophy of grading. It is upsetting to know that a third of the students in the experimental class had their grades lowered below normal expectations. The last sentence is distressing. If students made "more progress" in this program, their grades should have gone up, not down. It never was, and never should be, one of the aims of a good English curriculum that students taking it should be marked down.]

One of the main purposes of this evaluation, then, is to offer tentative conclusions about the potential effectiveness of the Project course, as it might be presented to the average-academic college-bound studnet.

The difficulty of being precise about these "averages" is evident; they will vary with the community and with the kind of testing used to place students. As stated above, reading comprehension scores available for the experimental group were sketchy, and further experience may well show the application of such scores combined with I. Q. scores as a means for selecting students for this program.

VII. THE IDEAL AVERAGE-ACADEMIC PROJECT ENGLISH STUDENT

Briefly, a year's experience with the eleventh-grade Project course in a class of 32 students whose I. Q. median was 113 causes this writer to evaluate the program as too difficult for a group whose I. Q. median is lower than 110. While the program is certainly at its best with the upper 25%, one of the program's attributes, as pointed out earlier, is its adaptability. With an average-academic class--one with an I. Q. median no lower than 110--it is necessary to be selective, to read fewer works, and to conduct several discussions at a more elementary level than one would with the top 20%. Again, reminded of earlier observations made in this paper about reading comprehension scores and possible short-comings of I. Q. scores as a gauge, one is aware of the danger of arbitrarily stating that the Project English course, slightly modified, will not work for a class whose median is lower than 110. From the results of this group's experience, nevertheless, one must say that the class median for the Project English course be no lower than 113. Of course background in the tenth-grade course would tend to make up for the experimental group's lack of experience in the inductive approach to the materials, and thus permit one to reconsider just where the ideal average-academic need stand on the I. Q. scale. All that has been said implies the following conclusions about the ideal average-academic student: (1) he should be industrious; (2) he should have an I. Q. no lower than 110; (3) he should have the tenth-grade Project course; (4) he should consider himself to be college-bound.

VIII. REMARKS UPON THE PROSPECTS OF UNTRAINED TEACHERS HANDLING THE PROJECT COURSE

One of the purposes of this report is to comment upon the prospects for the teaching of the course by teachers who have not had special training and who have had various amounts of experience.

Naturally, other talents being equal, experienced teachers are preferable to inexperienced ones, and those with advanced training preferable to those without. Still, it is equally obvious that if these courses spread to various school systems, they will have to be taught by teachers without years of experience and probably without special training in the program itself, and if it achieves widespread use, it will probably have to be taught by recent graduates in their first year of teaching. It can be done. Here follows, then, a series of remarks and suggestions derived from a year's experience in the course as taught by a teacher who was herself handling the method for the first time.

The quantity of material in the course, and the feasibility of certain selections and the phrasing of certain composition topics will always be questionable; thus the teacher must consider what to omit and how best to adjust the material and assignment to the student's need.

The prospective teacher of this program must give the students enough information about the purpose of each unit, its relationship with the next unit and the previous ones, and how this work fits into the framework of the course--all without sacrificing the inductive approach and becoming deductive or didactic. This involves the teacher's being aware of a continuum ranging from relative teacher-control to relative student-control without sacrificing the inductive approach. The teacher will have to watch that discussion does not become a pooling of ignorances. When it is necessary (and often enough it is, with an average-academic class), it is important that the teacher avoid beginning with too broad or generalizing questions and ask rather specific questions (such as those in the quizzes), leading up eventually to major concepts. In other words, only after a student understands a work for the most part can he discuss intelligently underlying themes and contribute his ideas. The teacher should not expect the student to read too deeply into a work.

The content of the course insures the student that no matter how unimaginative his English teacher is, he cannot lose; if he is capable of doing the work, the course will prepare him well for college English. The potential of a course like this in the hands of a sensitive and imaginative teacher is limitless. The inductive approach makes this possible. It is essential that a well-written plan or structure be imposed, as it is in this program, in order to have meaningful discussion. But the inexperienced teacher who never varies the discussion method with a group of average-academic abilit students will definitely lose the students' interest. (Ideas for variance of this method will be discussed under the Method of Teaching Project English The new teacher who presents the syllabus of the course day after day in a computer-like manner, i.e., teacher: question #1 - student: *feedback*; teacher: question #2 - student: *feedback*; etc., has a gross misconception of the function of the syllabus. In order to lead his students to discovery, teacher must conceptualize carefully in his mind before class just how he c best use the syllabus for that particular lesson and, in some instances, jus what he should select from the syllabus.

A set of detailed lesson plans like those in this program, which are the result of recent research by experienced teachers of English and which involve a modern structured approach to literature, language, and compositi is like an answered prayer to a new teacher--and even to some veterans. Obviously most teachers have neither the time nor the energy to come up with a set of lesson plans comparable to those prepared by a research team writing and testing for some three years. Having this course of study free a teacher to work toward getting his students to do their own analytical thin ing, which results in more lucid, logical, and grammatical written and ora expression.

Since it is inherent in the structure of the course to look essentially at the work of literature--and not outside it--for meaning, the new teacher should show some restraint in using visual aids. Yet, with an average-academic group, it is necessary to have some visual aids, even though one does not recommend making a papier-maché Puritan village!

The following reading suggestions the untrained teacher might find helpful in this program: (1) THE PROCESS OF EDUCATION by Jerome Bruner (2) Introductions to UNDERSTANDING FICTION and UNDERSTANDING POETRY by Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren; (3) "Aims of Education" by Alfred North Whitehead; (4) several selections listed as references in the language units.

Conclusions about the untrained teacher teaching Project English for the first time are: (1) it is possible for the untrained, new-to-the-program teacher to do a competent job teaching this program; (2) thorough preparati involving each day's discussion of various concepts is absolutely necessary for the teacher before class meets; (3) it is essential to vary now and then the inductive approach with an average-academic class; (4) the teacher mus not "read" to the class the questions in the syllabus; (5) through induction-- not deduction--the teacher must lead the class ; (6) the teacher must impro-

vise, adjust time schedule and materials where necessary, and be able tc
give students definite direction in the program--without sacrificing induct
of concepts from them; (7) realization on the part of the teacher that a pr
pared course of study still works best in the hands of a sensitive and im
aginative teacher is necessary for success in the course.

IX. REMARKS UPON THE INDUCTIVE METHOD

In considering the effectiveness of the question method, the following
points discussed in other sections of the report should be kept in mind: tl
a teacher must prepare the assigned reading thoroughly and think in advar
about what ideas the specified questions are meant to lead to; that the tea
must be ready to improvise supplementary questions to guide the discussi
when the original question gets a wrong or superficial answer (the purel
mechanical approach is fatal); and that certain adjustments in the curricu
itself, to be discussed below, may prove desirable in adapting the Projec
English program to the average-academic class.

Teaching language, literature, and composition through a variation of
Socratic method obviously stimulates and sharpens a student's thinking pr
cesses. The Project English course, designed to *induce* facts and truths
and powers of expressions, counteracts the charge that a program based
solely on any one method (in this case, discovery, discussion, or inducti
method) eventually loses the student because it either bores or inhibits hi
or finds him lacking the level of understanding needed to pursue the discu
sion of a literary work profitably. Admittedly, these are valid fears. Ir
ically, however, it is this teaching by discovery which allows the teacher
the freedom or flexibility for variations in the inductive process. The wa
course is structured, the *method* of the attempt to broaden and refine a s
dent's taste in literature, to increase his ability to organize, structure, a
clarify his oral and written expression, determines how effective a cours
can be. This is not to imply, of course, a minimizing of the contribution
the curriculum concentrated on language, literature, and composition uni
designed for college-bound students. That the student can only gain from
good reading has already been mentioned. It was the consensus of the cla
exposed to this program for the first time, that to read good literature an
study it through an inductive method of teaching was interesting, difficult,
and thought-provoking. As pointed out before, it was new and they liked i
in spite of their feelings (with which the teacher often more or less agree
that at times they had simply too much reading to do in too little time,

considering the other subjects they took, and that they would have been much better off if they had been exposed to the method before, i. e., if they had begun the sequential program in the tenth grade.

But it must be emphasized that in spite of these drawbacks, the students enjoyed the program more--and seem to have profited from it more--than their previous conventional courses. (See appendix for student comments on course.)

In general, the method, with its encouragement that the students discuss their own ideas and reach their own conclusions, would seem, then, to have strengthened their motivation. When the program is offered to less able students, quite probably this increase in motivation will decline and perhaps disappear--the method will by its nature encourage students who are so inclined to talk nonsense in the classroom discussions and otherwise to hinder the progress of the class. Thus, as above, it is not recommended that groups of ordinary-or-below ability be offered the Project English program; even with average-academic students a number of modifications in material and some in method have to be made.

Attention should be given to eliminating dead-end or trivial questions, and perhaps to providing the individual teacher with more extensive parenthetical comments about the goals of the individual questions. Also, the teacher mus realize and take the liberty of ignoring those questions which are distracting ambiguous or appear puzzling. In its quizzes and "Major Points for Reemphasis," the syllabus already provides much help, but more detailed commentary might be desirable.

Again, as the syllabus is modified for less gifted students, attention migh well be paid to beginning some lesson plans with more elementary questions (for example, about the immediate meanings or motivations of action in the literary work), to make the individual discussion easier to begin and to get the students talking freely about the work. The flexibility of the materials and method allow for this, and the new teacher should be aware that he often will want to ask only a few of the questions in the syllabus.

It has already been remarked that it is necessary to vary the teaching method with an average-academic group in order to maintain the students' interest. One such way is through sub-grouping of the class. In discussing BABBITT, five sub-groups were formed: one to discuss the character of Babbitt up to his apparent uneasiness wih his life; one to discuss Babbitt's character from this point to his final compromise; another to discuss the society and life in Zenith; one to discuss the satire in the book; and a group which tied together the concepts learned in the book and how the novel fitted into the framework of the unit. The groups were grouped homogeneously fo the most part to avoid the problem of having one or two brighter students take over the group and doing all of the work. This variation in the teaching method met with enthusiastic approval on the part of both teacher and students. Each group--with the other groups as audience--discussed as it saw best various details that led to the concepts of the lesson. The best group did a satire of the experimental Project English class in order to convey the satire in the book, such as the satire on religious hypocrisy!

Another liberty which should be exercised by the teacher of an average-academic class is to give students dittoed sheets along with a reading assignment, with suggestions of what to look for and to consider in reading chapters eight to fourteen. A purist would insist that this is contrary to the inductive approach, yet in studying a more complex work (some of the chapters in MOBY DICK or an Emerson essay, for instance), it is necessary to guide the in-experienced average-academic student or direct him in such a way that will help him to do his assignment thoughtfully. Thus, suggestions which hint about what to read for, while they can exclude some ideas the students would have gained from the assignment if he had had no imposed ideas from the teacher, help the average-academic student to discuss more thoughtfully than he would have otherwise.

Conclusions about the inductive method used with average-academic students are: (1) the teacher needs to be thoroughly familiar with the material and discussion questions; (2) a mechanical approach to discussion is fatal--the teacher should not "read" question #1, question #2, etc.; (3) the flexibility of the inductive method makes it feasible for variation in discussion approach; (4) the experimental group profited from the inductive approach; (5) variation in the discussion method such as sub-grouping and giving ditto sheets as guidance with a complex reading assignment is necessary to maintain the average-academic student's interest; (6) a few of the questions in the syllabus are dead-end ones or seem irrelevant or pointless; (7) selection of certain questions in the syllabus rather than the inclusion of all for class discussion often is helpful.

X. REMARKS ON THE MATERIALS OF THE PROJECT ENGLISH COURSE FOR AVERAGE-ACADEMIC STUDENTS

Composition Units

The composition program offers a discipline extremely valuable to the college-bound student: practice in writing critically and lucidly about significant literary works. The composition program calls for 16 themes, both in-class themes and take-home assignments. The approach to teaching composition is of course consistent with that of teaching literature: students are led inductively to plan an organized theme. Each theme involves a minimum of two days of class work: one for the assigning and preparing; one for returning and discussing themes. During the first semester, the program provides for more time to be spent on theme preparation, since it is necessary to introduce the student to theme organization.

Strong Points of Program with the Average-Academic Student

In the experimental group, the detailed, inductively taught composition units of the first half of the school year were generally successful in teaching theme-organization and prodding students to write critically about literature instead of whimsically about favorite summer vacations. It was a new, useful, and impressive experience for the students to take part in "the making of a theme," as they did in the composition lessons involving THE CRUCIBLE, THE SCARLET LETTER, ETHAN FROME, THE RISE OF SILAS LAPHAM, and works of Emerson and Thoreau. To the experimental group it seemed--after several English classes of learning that it is necessary to have topic sentence, supporting details, and concluding statements--that for the first time they saw just how to go about arriving at basic organization and what kind of questions to ask when considering their topic.

Use of the overhead projector and discussion of sample copies of student themes taught students more in less time than the most detailed marginal notes on returned themes. The device of the organization check--an exercise requesting students to list the topic sentence of their returned theme, the supporting details, transition words, and clincher--quickly silenced any protests regarding comments on corrected themes. This exercise would serve as a time-saving check for coherent organization of themes throughout the school year. However, theme organization and theme development are not the same thing.

The theme assignments serve as an integral part of the whole course, summing up aspects of a unit, bridging and relating both individual works and units, reemphasizing and extending class discussion about cultural patterns in America and underlying themes, and steadily pointing in the direction of "what it is like to be alive." When in a discussion of a work, details and concepts necessary to writing well on a particular topic do not unfold--and this surely happens at times with an average-academic group--then the teacher will have to prompt the student or adjust the composition topic. In several instances, the program provides two choices for a topic, which students usually welcome. Again, as is the advantage with the whole Project English program, the composition units allow for flexibility, i. e., the teacher can narrow and vary topics according to students' background and ability. Very few of the 32 students ended up doing poorly on the composition assignments thus adjusted. The composition assignments modified, however, must not be so narrow that they fail to fit meaningfully into the framework of the course, and thus defeat the original purpose for the assignments.

Recommendations for Composition Program

The strength in having comprehensive composition topics is also a weakness with an average-academic group, as implied above. Lacking experience the students in the experimental group did not know what questions to ask or which directions to take if a theme topic was complex or broad. Here is an instance where the teacher has to adjust the program. One specific example which occurred in this group was with the MOBY DICK composition assignment, which was too involved for the experimental group to handle well. One had to limit it to: "Choose and explain one literary aspect of MOBY DICK (a theme, a character, a symbol, humor, etc.)." Also, some of the composition topics made certain assumptions that the student had not arrived at. Some students felt Emperor Jones was not a victim of his society, although the discussion questions and the composition topic as phrased, "In what ways are Wash and Emperor Jones victims of society?" assumed he was. It is assumed, however, that such disagreements will come out in the discussion questions, which the teacher will come to realize are the final guiding determiners for phrasing theme topics.

In Unit VI, the first work is THE HAIRY APE, and after two days of discussing this O'Neill play, the students are asked to write a paper on what is meant by the modern American quest for identity (the name of this unit), basing their answer on Yank. It would be more fruitful for the average-academic class to wait until they had read and discussed the next assignment of the unit, THE RED BADGE OF COURAGE, and then be asked to write on a topic like, "Compare the effect of the tattered man on Henry with the effect of Mildred on Yank." By this time the student is more likely to come forth with a better comprehension of the quest for identity, and also he is able to control such a topic. Then by the end of the unit, one can assign a paper which ties other works of others units in with the "Quest for Identity" unit, e.g., employing part of the composition assignment which was a part of the "Yank" assignment as originally stated at the beginning of Unit VI, "Show how two other characters studied this year (outside Unit VI) have experienced a similar quest for identity to Yank's." Students in the experimental group liked this assignment and did well with it because it gave them a chance to take the initiative and they were, at this point--although not at an earlier point--prepared to do so.

One reasonable complaint by a bright girl in the experimental group was that the topics on literature do not put enough emphasis on students' expressing their own feelings. The themes the class remembered best were those that overtly involved their making a statement of their personal feelings.

One difficulty in students' learning theme organization arises from their handling the mechanics expertly, yet, ironically, never really developing their papers fully. While the students for the most part grasped quickly enough the framework for a multi-paragraph paper of topic sentence, subtopics, supporting details, transitions, and clincher, their use of this organization was often superficial: topics were not as fully developed as they should have been; the "cause" details were not always related to the "effect" details," etc. The student would write well to a certain point in his paper, then he would often tire and quit, tacking on a clincher, when the paper was incompletely developed. Also, the phraseology of a student's opening paragraph, so mechanically done, often became predictable, wanting greatly some variation and heightening effect. The average-academic student's theme organization was so mechanical that often he neglected any creativity of phrasing. Sentences sounded artificial because several students lacked the sophistication and confidence necessary to vary sentence structure and word choice. Thus, it is necessary to do further, intensive work in theme development.

Another consideration for strengthening the composition program for average-academic students results from the assumption the program makes that students need no help--or very little--with basic mechanical and syntactical errors, like run-on sentences, sentence fragments, and split infinitives. Errors which several students in the experimental group made in simple, elementary mechanics of writing, e. g., punctuation and sentence structure, demonstrated the need for training in these areas. Also implied was the need for drill work, which, in turn, necessitates having less time for conceptualizing. Habitual mechanical errors in themes of average-academic students interfered with the logic and clarity of the papers written, in spite of the fact that the students might have the organization of a paper according to mechanical formula. In a grammar test given to the eleventh-grade group at the end of the school year, required by Perry High School's English Department, several of the 32 students, who had done well in literature work, scored low because they had never mastered the basic mechanical skills which machine or drill learning usually teaches. Since the Project program begins on quite a different level of English, the average-academic student did not get the attention needed in such mechanics. Therefore I recommend that some room be made in the composition program for the average-academic students, who are likely to be weaker in mechanics than the students in the upper 20% of their class.

The previous points about handicaps in the program when presented to average-academic students demand that more time be given to the composition program. According to the present schedule, 38 days are given to composition. One of the most necessary modifications in the Project program for teaching average-academic students is creating time for at least one full week during the program for composition work. In addition to the usual one day devoted to composition here and there throughout the program --with the exception of the three intensive sections in the composition units at the first of the year--the teacher and students need to sit down and concentrate on theme development rather than flit off to the next item in the course work. Use of student themes to serve this purpose is naturally the most effective way. Taking a few days to give a student individual attention, as well as working with the overhead projector, brings better results in the writing. Also, since it is necessary to give more time to composition for an average-academic class for mechanics, structure, content development, and discussion of returned themes, it is recommended that a minimum of three themes be deleted from the program.

The exercise or lesson in the program which called for dividing the students into groups of four or two to read and comment on each others' themes did not work with the experimental group. It was more trouble than it was worth because students were too polite, afraid of hurting feelings, and lacked the training to tell in several instances just what was wrong with the papers.

One final suggestion for the composition program involves allowing more room for creative work from the average-academic student. Even if the product is not particularly good, it keeps up his interest. The crowded schedule hardly leaves time for students to write personal experience or imaginative themes, short stories, or poems. Admittedly, there is one assignment for an expository paper based on students' post-high school graduation plans, and one autobiographical theme (not worth doing), but these are not enough variety for keeping the average-academic student's interest. In spite of two factors--that teaching creative writing is not the purpose of the Project Englist course (only at best a by-product), and that students who have creative talent will naturally write so on their own--the students needed to do some "original" work, however unsophisticated it may be. While it is not suggested that the program include diorama-making, I suggest that the teacher give the students more chance for writing about non-literary subjects. Such relief from theme assignments of reactions to literary works does not detract from the program in general. One such example would be an imaginative writing assignment stemming from the definition lesson in Unit II of the language material. For discussion of the operational definition, PEANUT'S HAPPINESS and FRIEND books can be used to teach the concept; then students can be given various words from which to choose in order to develop a theme, using operational definitions. The students enjoyed doing the Little Red Riding Hood paragraph in Language Unit V, and the operational definition theme offers the same chance for imaginative fun, so necessary with an average-academic student in order to keep up his enthusiasm. Units III, IV, and V of the language program lend themselves to this, or serve as springboards for both descriptive and imaginative writing. E. A. Robinson's poem "Credo" is another stimulus for a theme.

The recommendations made for changes in the composition program lead to the main criticism of the whole Project English program for average-academic students: although most of the program is significantly worth while, there is more than can be reasonably covered with an average-academic group.

Language Units

Perhaps because of the emphasis on semantics in the eleventh grade, the experimental group became reasonably involved and interested in the language program. Of the six language units, the section in Unit III about study of the dictionary interested average-academic students least, even though they were participating in the working out of it.

Unit I -- Language and Culture

While the objective--to induce students to see the relationship between language and culture--can be reached with an average-academic class through the process set forth in the program, the complete Kluckhohn selection was too much of an abstraction for the experimental group to handle. Thus I recommend that average-academic students read only certain selections from Kluckhohn's excellent article, "The Gift of Tongues," rather than the whole. Added to this would be the inclusion of relevant incidents in our culture that show language-culture relationship (besides discussion of teen-age slang mentioned in the procedure). One could turn to actual experiences that foreigners to our country have in comprehending the English language. An ambassador and his wife, dressed in formal attire, arrived at a Washington party to find to their embarrassment that the other guests were in casual clothes. The invitation had read, "Come, we'll have a ball!"

The recording "A Word in Your Ear" was extremely helpful.

Unit II -- Definition of Language

A review of tenth-grade language study is necessary and valuable to the student, but a group which has not had the tenth-grade program is at an obvious disadvantage. Time was lost here with the experimental group, since they had no linguistics backgoound. Here one questions what must be the structural approach to grammar in the tenth-grade program. The program would seem less dated and more helpful if it would include generative (transformational) grammar as well as the structural approach.

Both selections from "Animal Communication and Human Language" and the film "Definition of Language" helped to clarify and reinforce the unit.

Unit III -- Dictionaries and Definitions

The study of dictionaries as prescriptive and descriptive, using WEBSTER'S SECOND and WEBSTER'S THIRD INTERNATIONAL dictionaries, would work more smoothly for both teacher and student if each student were given a copy of the pamphlet reproduced from the Introduction to the THIRD INTERNATIONAL titled "How to Use WEBSTER'S THIRD NEW INTERNATIONAL DICTIONARY." This eliminates the confusion of each team's trying to get to the dictionary during class time. It is also helpful with an average-academic group when a team fails to make clear its report to the class about what the function of, say, dialect and regional labels is. And finally, it shortens the class time spent on the dictionary part of the unit, for which not enough time is allotted in the first place.

I also recommend for an average-academic group easier words with which to work than several of the suggestions in the subject label and the status label sections.

Moreover, not enough time is allotted in the schedule for the section on definition. Discussing words from Ambrose Bierce's THE DEVIL'S DICTIONARY, is additional but helps to strengthen the concept one is trying to induce from the average-academic student. Of interest to the average-academic student and relevant to the dictionary unit--even the Definition of Language and What is Meaning units for that matter--would be an article such as Dr. Bergen Evans' "Editor's Choice--You Couldn't Do Woise."

One final point which comes up here: if the teacher is a dyed-in-the-wool traditionalist and prescriptivist, the language units will suffer in his hands. They will be made much more meaningful to the student if the teacher has had some previous acquaintance with the philosophies behind the other two grammars (structural and generative).

Unit IV -- What Is Meaning

If the teacher is aware of the material in this unit at the beginning of the year, he can point out figurative language in various literary works throughout the course rather than wait until this unit comes up in the schedule. (Some of the questions in the literary lessons, of course, do indicate that the student should be aware of imagery in the work.) As pointed out in the Discussion of Composition section of this paper, the metaphoric and figurative language sections are useful as a springboard for student composition work. It also would be helpful if the teacher would pluck out various metaphors from poems to be studied in the course to use in this unit as illustrations of figurative language. A teacher might want to substitute different paragraph examples from those on L19 for an average-academic class in order to induce further the concept of positive and negative connotations.

Unit V -- Levels of Usage

An average-academic class can handle this one well. The experimental group did not need to be convinced of the unit's main point: "Good English is English that is appropriate to the situation." The group understood the point made in using Mark Twain's "Buck Fanshaw's Funeral," but they did not seem to delight in this selection as much as the teacher hoped they would. Perhaps a modern example would be more effective; yet it is difficult to think of a better selection than the Mark Twain classic. Regarding the samples on the L30 sheet, examples taken from student writing could be incorporated here to show vulgate.

It should be pointed out here as a reminder that this unit does not deal directly with the problem of usage such as split infinitive and the use of who or whom. Since grammar seems to be undergoing a transition period in the schools, perhaps it is just as well. On the other hand, it would seem that there should be some basic agreement about what is considered usage in the English texts for high-school classes. The experimental group took a departmental test at the end of the school year, given by the administration at the school, on "grammatical usage"--a term that is technically contradictory. The test was simply traditional grammar parading under a different name.

I also recommend that a minimum of five days be spent on this unit, with an average-academic class.

Unit VI -- Dialects

This unit obviously ties in well with the other language units and with several literary selections, including the spelling found in Faulkner's "Wash" to indicate his characters' speech. I recommend, however, that the teacher of an average-academic group read the book DIALECTS U.S.A. carefully himself, then select passim what seems relevant to his students' needs and remembering to stress the concept that much of what is thought ungrammatical is really dialectical, and that the word "dialect" as used here does not have negative connotations. One boy in the experimental group had a Pennsylvania Dutch background and was able to contribute several dialectical examples. Employing selections of dialect prevalent in the speech community of the students helps to avoid a kind of "so what?" response on the student's part.

The need for the teacher to innovate much more in this unit than in the others is due to the present plan of procedure which is over-generalized and hardly seems inductive. The film on "Dialects," unlike the earlier film on "Language," was boring repetition. The students gained nothing from it.

The language units in themselves are useful and cumulative. Because they are sometimes relevant to the literature being discussed, it is important that the new Project English teacher familiarize himself with these units before the year begins to avoid having students wonder what is the point of some of the language sections, and to take advantage of every opportunity to relate them to the literature and composition. Also, more class time has to be allotted when students have a homework assignment which is to be discussed in class. In the experimental group, everyone wanted to read his Little Red Riding Hood composition. The direction "ask a few of the students for their examples" hardly seems fair with an average-academic group. Everyone wants to get in on the act.

Literature Units

While the language units were easier and thus more fun for the students, the literature units were of course more demanding.

The content of the eleventh-grade Project English course is organized according to themes which reflect the sequential pattern of American culture. The six units are not meant to be dichotomous, of course, and there is continuous emphasis on the overlapping of works in one unit with those in another; for example, one can see Puritan attitudes in some works other than those studied in the Puritan Unit, and so forth. This interrelationship and cumulative effect in the program is one of its obvious strengths.

Recommendations for Literature Program

First, I recommend that students spend the first week of the course with a lesson on how to read a literary work for more than just literal meaning. This is a necessity for those like the experimental group who had not taken the tenth-grade course; but it perhaps would be a worthwhile refresher for even those average-academic students who have had the tenth-grade program. The recommendation of an introductory reading lesson at the beginning of the course results from seeing students "read chapter seven" without recognizing any characterization, foreshadowing, establishment of mood, presentation of conflict, etc. Just as one can listen to a Beethoven symphony without hearing theme development, timbre or orchestration, or look at a piece of art without seeing the use of form, line, color, and balance, one can fail to see the art form of a literary work. Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren, in UNDERSTANDING FICTION, remark "...before extensive reading can be profitable, the student must have some practice in intensive reading." This, of course, is the aim of Project English; but the average-academic student needs a special lesson in reading intensively which overtly and consciously will show him what he is supposed to be doing. The teacher's analyzing of a work for him at the beginning of the year is helpful, and almost necessary. Jerome Bruner, in THE PROCESS OF EDUCATION says something to the effect that if the teacher does not rattle off an explanation of something but subjects what he has to say to a critical analysis, he can often instill such a habit into his students. I am not saying of course that during this week of the how-to-read lesson that the teacher should analyze everything for the class, but he should subject the students' responses to his own critical analysis and thus be in charge of bringing out the objectives of the lesson.

Also, such a lesson in reading would save schedule time as well as intensify a student's conceptualizing throughout the course. During the first week, admittedly, the teacher would have to be more firmly at the helm and there would be less inductive teaching taking place, but the inexperience of the students demands that this be so.

Since the program is too full, perhaps it would be best to choose for the reading lesson a work already in the schedule. Two suggestions are Shirley Jackson's "The Lottery," already in the program, and Irwin Shaw's "The Dry Rock," not in the program. Another is Chapter One (after "The Custom House") of THE SCARLET LETTER. An understanding of the function of some of the following literary terms would be the objective of "how to read a literary work beyond the literal level" lesson: conflict, structure, theme, setting, mood, tone, point of view, imagery, irony, characterization, flashbacks, and pace. In view of the objective of the reading lesson, the teacher must realize, however, that one cannot teach everything all at once, and in breaking down some of the complexities it is inevitable that one is cutting some of the ties. But actually--on a grander scale--this is what the whole Project English course does: breaks down into sequences and builds up.

Unit I -- The American Puritan Attitude

THE CRUCIBLE, THE SCARLET LETTER, and ETHAN FROME, taking the extra time of one day with each, worked well. There is not enough time for an average-academic class to cover all of the Puritan Prose selections. The most effective were the ones by Cotton Mather, Increase Mather, and Mary Rowlandson. Close guidance should be given in working with the allegory "Young Goodman Brown," since the majority of students in the experimental group claimed (and proved) that they "didn't get" it. Also, one may wonder whether Ethan Frome can be called a "tragic hero."

Unit II -- The American Desire for Success

This unit could be called the "American Dream."

While several of the students in the inexperienced group complained about having to read THE RISE OF SILAS LAPHAM, one does not know of a better substitute for bringing average-academic students concepts involving moral and material success and linkage with Puritan attitudes. ALL MY SONS and THE GREAT GATSBY were successful, partly because the students had more of an affinity for them--they were "more modern." One still questions, with the Aristotlean idea of a tragic hero in mind and the fact that OEDIPUS REX turns up in the twelfth-grade Project English course, the validity of the assumption made in the lesson plan that Joe Keller and Jay Gatsby (like Willy Loman) can be called tragic heroes.

Unit III -- The American Idealism

Close teacher guidance is necessary to get an average-academic class through Emerson's two essays, but the essays are two of the best and most illuminating and appropriate works in the program; therefore they should not under any circumstances be eliminated. Even if the teacher ends up doing most of the talking, in the experimental group students are able to benefit from it and apply on their own ideas from the essays to later themes and discussions in the course, and consequently to build conceptually from it.

Much of the WALDEN selection is too difficult for an average-academic class, partly because a character such as Thoreau is too remote from them --"some kind of nut." One wonders whether the essay "Civil-Disobedience," plus some historical background, would be a better choice, as well as a few selections from Thoreau's JOURNAL, although thematically these suggestions would not be so appropriate. The "Economy" chapter, with the exception of the concrete details about Thoreau's readying his house at Walden Pond, is too lengthy and complex for the average-academic student. Perhaps the teacher could select well-known quotations in this chapter which get to the heart of the matter, rather than to ignore the chapter completely since some of it is necessary to introduce the students to the Thoreau and the Walden Pond story. The examples of figurative speech and thoughtful sentences in WALDEN, along with the ideas set forth, causes one to hesitate to recommend deletion of the work from the course. Admittedly, however, an average-academic student cannot handle Thoreau's concept of nature and the literary effects in the WALDEN selections in the brief time allotted for doing so in the schedule.

It is not possible to have a profitable discussion of all of the poetry in this unit with an average-academic class; thus it is recommended that the teacher again be selective. It would be a loss to the students, however, if the teacher were to eliminate all of the Walt Whitman selections. Above all, included should be Section 6 of "Song of Myself," and Sections 31, 32, 50, and 52. Also, some of Emily Dickinson and Robinson 's "Credo" should be included.

It is recommended that the students read to themselves and then write about the organization of and emotion in Lincoln's prose in "The Gettysburg Address" and the "Second Inaugural Address," before class discussion of Lincoln's prose style takes place.

The experimental group was more receptive to Carl Sandburg's poetry than to Edna St. Vincent Millay's for the obvious reasons; still one suggests deleting Miss Millay's poems with an average-academic group. It should be emphasized here, however, that for the most part, the students thoroughly enjoyed the poetry selections covered and talked well about them. I wish more time had been allotted for the Frost selections and recommend especially "Mending Wall" and "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" for this level class.

OUR TOWN was not the hit with experimental group one imagined it would be. Students insisted upon what seems rather--in a sense--paradoxical: that they would much rather see another kind of life than their own; they had no desire to identify realistically with Emily and George. The glamour of Jay Gatsby and Daisy Buchanan held more interest for them. Perhaps this let-down feeling of reading about families as typical as the Webbs and the Gibbs was caused by their constant exposure (outside of class) to their favorite kind of book: JAMES BOND.

Unit IV -- The American Darker Spirit

One has to be a fan of Poe to recommend as much Poe as is in the program. "The Fall of the House of Usher" was the most successful of the Poe selections.

One of the most valuable contributions of the course is that it includes the reading and discussion of Melville's MOBY DICK. It is unrealistic, however, to assume that an average-academic class can spend less than two weeks on the novel and understand some of its concepts. Thus I recommend a concentrated ten days minimum for MOBY DICK with an average-academic group.

Unit V -- The American Dream Reconsidered

Actually there was reconsidering of the American Dream in works of Unit II such as THE GREAT GATSBY. In this unit the student can see that the reconsideration is more overt.

I question the choice of THE JUNGLE, not because of working with an average-academic class, but because of its being propaganda and negating any art form. Alternatives might be Steinbeck's THE GRAPES OF WRATH or IN DUBIOUS BATTLE.

Both HUCKLEBERRY FINN and WINTERSET, with Vanzetti's "Last Speech to the Court" worked excellently with an average-academic class but one more day is needed for each.

More time also has to be spent on BABBITT--another day. All of the students felt much more of an affinity for Babbitt than Henry Thoreau, of course, and most of them found little to criticize or that was shocking in the character of Babbitt. ("Babbitt is my Dad.")

Unit VI -- The Modern American Quest for Identity

Just as it was with Emperor Jones, it was even more difficult for many students to see Yank of THE HAIRY APE as a victim of society. It was both interesting and disappointing to see how little compassion most of the students showed throughout the course for "tragic" characters. The average-academic student could, for the most part, only grasp Yank as a repulsive being who should be glad he has a job, even if it is down in a ship's boiler room. Most of them were incapable of seeing Yank symbolically.

Unlike the "Cyclists' Raid," Thomas Wolfe's "The Four Lost Men" was a failure with the experimental group. I suggest deleting this from the schedule. Although it is possible to fit THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA into the theme of this unit--and it was popular with the students--I feel is is certainly stretching the point to claim that Santiago is on a "quest for identity" search.

THE UNVANQUISHED proved too difficult for the experimental group. Although one girl was moved enough to come to school wearing a sprig of verbena, students only understood the novel when the teacher explained it. Because Faulkner writes so superbly and does so much in his stories, I regret not to recommend it. However, if a teacher takes an average-academic class through the novel, he must not expect to induce many of the concepts asked for since it will be all the students can do to understand the story line.

Poetry

In regard to the poetry in Units IV, V, and VI, it is recommended that the teacher--even though it is difficult--be selective, and not try to cover all of the poems. Of far greater value it seems would be a couple of days spent taking the students through a rather careful analysis of a poem. "Birches" by Robert Frost, or his "The Road Not Taken" would be excellent choices for analysis. Actually, it would even be more helpful if a poem analysis lesson took place earlier in the year, or twice during the year. In a sense, class discussion of a poem is an attempt to analyze it, but an exercise where students can see the poetic effects of structure, tone, and imagery, and versification--the form--, rather than giving attention mostly to content, would be as helpful to the student and consequently to future class discussions of poetry, as would be the "how to read a literary work" lesson suggested for the first week of the course work.

The developing of structure in "Birches," the changing tone, both the concreteness and symbolism of birch trees, and the blank verse and simple and complex word choices lead to a meaningful analysis of a good poem.

Also, it is recommended that the poem, "Trees," by Joyce Kilmer be included in the program along with an analysis of why it is a bad poem--which would have to be done by the teacher obviously rather than the inexperienced student. UNDERSTANDING POETRY by Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren is a helpful source for this.

XI. SUGGESTIONS OF OTHER WORKS

Examination of the materials points up a serious void in the contents: that of literature dealing more or less indirectly with a problem pertinent to our times--civil rights. It is strongly recommended that the Project's eleventh-grade program include a section about the Negro. One especially excellent choice would be "Where is the Voice Coming From" by Eudora Welty which appeared in the July 6, 1963 issue of The New Yorker. Other suggestions include parts of James Baldwin's essay, "The Fire Next Time"; Robert McLaughlin's "A Short Wait Between Trains"; the play, "Raisin in the Sun"; a Langston Hughes selection; or Clara Laidlaw's "The Little Black Boy" which appeared in the December, 1942 issue of The Atlantic Monthly.

Other suggestions for materials in the eleventh-grade Project English program--not as additional but only as substitutions--are as follows:

The American Desire for Success:	THE ADDING MACHINE by Elmer Rice "The Short and Happy Life of Francis Macomber" by Ernest Hemingway ALL THE KING'S MEN by Robert Penn Warren Note: The Warren selection could be used in The American Dream Reconsidered unit.

The Darker American Spirit: "How Beautiful with Shoes" by Wilbur Daniel Steele
THE PEARL by John Steinbeck
Note: The Steinbeck selection could be used in The American Dream Reconsidered also.

The American Quest for Identity: "Of Mice and Men" by John Steinbeck
"I Want to Know Why" by Sherwood Anderson
"The Bear" (short version) by William Faulkner

Room for twenty more days must be made in the Project's eleventh-grade program in order for the average-academic to keep pace; especially a minimum of twenty days is needed since an extra week for composition as has been proposed is extremely important. Just how this is to be accomplished, other than by deletion of some selections, is still an unknown. Nevertheless, the flexibility of the course of study makes it possible, and the following-through of as many recommendations set forth here as seem feasible would begin to shape and direct the eleventh-grade Project English program toward the average-academic student.

XII. VISUAL AIDS

Having visual aids seems to contradict the inherent design of Project English because one ceases to treat a work of literary art in and of itself. With an average-academic class, however, visual aids are highly recommended, although it is difficult to find time for their insertion (other than the films already called for in the linguistic units), since the Project English schedule is already crowded. However, a student bringing in a picture of a particular author's birthplace which he visited last summer; or a colorful chart growing out of the study of metaphors and symbols, perhaps ingeniously done by a couple of students with an artistic bent, can always be pushed into the schedule. The more "average" the class, the more they will appreciate a visual-aid break.

XIII. EXAMINATIONS AND GRADES

Quiz, theme, and class participation grades afford the teacher a representative idea of the students' work, thus eliminating the need for an examination. If an exam is required by the school board (as it was in my case), then I recommend an essay exam in which the students can develop one or more themes that thread their way through two or more units. One of the authors of Project English suggested the following three exam questions. In the experimental group, each student wrote on one of them.

A. Discuss Puritan attitudes as seen in BABBITT, THE RISE OF SILAS LAPHAM, and WALDEN.

B. Discuss attitudes of the American Dream Reconsidered as seen in THE HAIRY APE, THE GLASS MENAGERIE, and MOBY DICK.

C. Discuss attitudes of American Idealism as seen in THE UNVANQUISHED THE GREAT GATSBY, and THE RED BADGE OF COURAGE.

Also, a simple analysis of a poem--specifying tone, imagery, and versification as well as meaning--was called for. Examination results were in line with the experimental group's composition work.

XIV. CONCLUSION

Project English was moderately successful with the average-academic experimental group. Exposure to one year of Project English is better than none, but the sequential exposure to the program gives the student more of a chance to adjust to its method. The inductive approach is only as good as the class and teacher handling it; the more average the class, the more the teacher must improvise and "teach"; still, one can scarecly imagine a better alternative than an inductive approach to get students to think and conceptualize. Variation on the discussion method, *e. g.*, dividing into groups, is a welcome change of pace. An average-academic class needs a brief lesson in "how-to-read-a-literary-work" at the beginning of the year. Instead of reading numerous poems, concentration on fewer poems, beginning with a lesson in "how-to-analyze-a-poem," is more beneficial. Some Negro literature, pertinent to Civil Rights, should be included in the program. Emerson should not be discarded because of difficulty; the teacher must step in and suspend the inductive method for a lesson that is difficult but too worthwhile to pass up. With the discussion approach, the teacher must be alert to drawing out shy students, as well as to mistaking enthusiasm for learning. Students lack training for critcizing themes in an average class, therefore they should not. The teacher's working with student themes under an overhead projector is the most profitable use of theme time in class. At least another week should be allotted to composition in order to do such work.

The program is too full a one for an average-academic class; thus a less breathless pace and deletion of some works is required. Though deletion decisions are tough to make, the flexibility of Project English allows for some adjustment, as it allows for variation in the degree of "induction" in the teaching method.

XV. APPENDIX

Student Comments

The following comments are excerpts from the experimental group's evaluation reports. In hopes of receiving candid comments, I collected these evaluations after a final grade had been turned in; the students were aware of this. Each comment selected tends to reflect the majority opinion, except the last one which was the only dissenting voice (written by a non-college-bound student).

"The teaching method forced me to think more than in any other course I have ever had. But I feel more time should have been used to help us in grammar and mechanical errors in our themes."

* * *

"It was the first class in which I could come right out and say what I wanted to; it was the first time I had ever looked beyond the surface of a literary work, into such detail."

* * *

"More time should be given for the reading of larger books; when you are pushed to read so much in one night, you are concentrating on finishing the assignment and rushed so much that you don't understand half of what you're reading."

* * *

"In spite of all the work, I hope I can continue Project English next year."

* * *

"At times it seemed that there was not enough variation in the teaching method. It was a relief when we divided up into groups to discuss BABBITT."

* * *

"The books I read in the past nine months are books, for the most part, I enjoyed but books I never would have read on my own."

* * *

"This class was one of the most boring things I have ever had the misfortune to encounter. It seemed that the main purpose of the course was to analyze novels, poems and other literary works. This whole thing to me has no practical application."

* * *

Student Theme

This theme is one of the best produced by my experimental class. It involved a discussion of Huck's conflicts and how his resolution of them reveals his character. In the syllabus, the theme topic calls for discussion of three of Huck's conflicts; my class was asked to discuss only two.

"Huck Finn in Mark Twain's book of the same name is confronted with numerous conflicts, varying in degrees of importance. Two of the more significant problems he faces are his changing attitudes toward aiding a runaway slave and telling the truth. Although the two somewhat overlap, each is marked by certain distinctions and thus furnish two separate problems.

"While aiding the runaway slave Jim in his escape, there was an ever present conflict in Huck's mind. He felt his actions were definitely wrong. You just didn't help a runaway slave; it was as simple as that. The closer Jim came to freedom, the more uneasy Huck became. 'I began to get it through my head that he was most free--and who was to blame for it? Why, me. I just couldn't get that out of my conscience. It got to troubling me so I couldn't rest.' Huck's several attempts to stop Jim's escape were futile. Once he wrote a note to Jim's owner, Miss Watson, telling her where she might locate Jim. Huck then tried to pray that he might become a better person by refusing to help Jim in the future, but he found that he couldn't. 'You can't pray a lie,' he says. This entire incident is rather ironical for Huck failed to realize that in doing what he felt was wrong, he was actually giving a subjected, perhaps mistreated individual a chance to be free and equal. This Christian act of brotherly love Huck considered wrong! His final decision to tear up the note and help Jim despite the consequences reveals much about his character. By resolving to do this even though he believed it was wrong, Huck showed that deep down he possessed admirable qualities which inevitably led him to do what was right.

"Huck also faced a conflict concerning truth. Gifted with a wild imagination, he found that his ability to make up fantastic stories was a convenient tool to be used when in a difficult situation. As he encountered numerous occasions on his trip where this tool might be put to use, he soon came to treat the truth rather lightly. We see, however, that as time passes he matured and learned to recognize times when the truth must be told. Such a time was when the king and duke deceived the Wilks family and planned to cheat them from an inheritance. Reflected Huck, 'Here's a case where I'm blest if it don't look to me like the tuuth is better and actually safer than a lie.' Huck felt compassion for the naive sisters who were being taken in by the ruthless frauds. He just couldn't sit back and allow them to be hurt and taken advantage of. His final decision to tell the oldest girl, Mary Jane, the truth about the imposters and assist the sisters in their battle against the pair of cheating scoundrels shows that Huck was capable of understanding and feeling for others and would do what had to be done in order to accomplish the end result of justice and fair play. Although at times he looked upon the truth with indifference, he realized that it must be respected when lack of respect would bring unjust harm to others.

"The settlement of Huck's conflicts is evidence that a sensitive moral, and understanding character was hidden beneath his outward appearance of an innocent, fun-loving, and adventuresome boy. His experience contributed to his character development or maturity by bringing to the surface innate qualities which until this time had remained dormant. His decisions reflect admirable character traits, including an inborn desire to do what he felt was the right thing to do."

Grade 12
Year 1964-1965

PROJECT ENGLISH TWELFTH-GRADE CURRICULUM STUDY: THE AVERAGE ACADEMIC STUDENT AND THE TEACHER WITHOUT SPECIAL PREPARATION

by
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August, 1965

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I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND ASSUMPTIONS

Aims of the Project

Project English, a sequential and cumulative three-year high-school English program, has been taught with considerable success, by teachers trained in the use of the program's curriculum and materials, to above-average, college-bound students. During the school year 1964-65, an attempt was made to see if this program might be extended to include a broader range of students and teachers. The experiment, made possible through a project sponsored by the United States Office of Education, was conducted by Carnegie Institute of Technology, with the aid of three Pittsburgh public schools. The Pittsburgh board of education selected the three schools, one school for each year of the Project English course; and the principal of each chosen school provided an average academic class to take part in the experiment. The three teachers involved were experienced teachers, but untrained in the specific use of the Project English materials, and were enrolled as half-time students in the master's program in English at Carnegie Institute of Technology.

Specifically, the aims of the project were two: (1) to see if the course could be effectively taught to average academic students and, if so, what modifications of the course might be desirable; (2) to see if a capable teacher, given no special training in the use of the curriculum and materials of the Project English course, could effectively use them and, if so, what modifications in them might be desirable.

My role in the experiment was to teach the twelfth-grade course and to evaluate the results, in terms of these aims. My own background, in terms of the qualifications cited above, consisted of two years of teaching in a private school, Pennsylvania certification for teaching secondary English, and enrollment in the master's program in English at Carnegie Institute of Technology.

Background of the Students

The principal of the school in which I was placed chose an existing twelfth-grade average academic class for the program. At the beginning of the school year, this class consisted of twenty-eight students: fourteen girls and fourteen boys . Through the course of the year, three of the girls and one of the boys dropped out of school, which brought the class size down to twenty-four. This size is not really an "average" class size, at least not in a school system where the average number of students in a class is often from thirty-five to forty.

As a segment from the "academic" track, the class was comprised of both the college-bound students and the non-college-bound students, and excluded only those involved in strictly vocational training. Four of the students, all boys, were accepted by colleges for the fall of 1965; in addition, three boys and one girl *hoped* to go on to college after working six months to a year. (Two of this latter group came to their decision during the course of the year.) Of the remaining members of the class, two of the girls planned marriage immediately upon graduation from high school, and the other girls intended to take up nursing, secretarial, or sales-clerking work; the boys either planned to enter the armed forces or hoped to find work in such areas as truck driving, construction painting, or mail clerking. Most of the boys were following their father's occupations; only two of the fathers were professional people, both of whose sons are going to college.

As an "average" class, the students had scores on the Otis Gamma intelligence tests, administered in 1964, which ranged from 89 to 116. On the Iowa Silent Reading tests, administered in 1963, the students ranked from the fourth percentile to the eighty-ninth. None of the students had had, of course, any previous experience with the Project English curriculum.

This look at the backgrounds of the students is important for the establishment of certain assumptions and conclusions. In general, the relative success of, and student response to, the project was determined by the motivating factor of college ambitions, and not by the test scores. Since this distinction between the college-bound and the non-college-bound is a sharp one, and since the majority of the class consisted of the latter group, the generalizations, conclusions, and recommendations of this paper, except where otherwise noted, will be in terms of the latter group.

Within this non-college-bound group, however, the test scores are particularly meaningful, especially those from the Iowa Silent Reading tests. In general, those students with the higher reading scores did considerably better with, and seemed to benefit more by, the course. The extreme range of reading abilities caused a number of problems in teaching the materials, especially in the literature, which dominates the curriculum. A first recommendation to consider, therefore, concerns the composition of the Project English class. I strongly recommend that the college-bound students be separated from the non-college-bound students, and that the latter be homogeneously grouped, with reading abilities used as the major determining factor in the grouping.

II. EVALUATION OF THE EXPERIMENT IN TERMS OF THE STUDENTS

Introduction

At the first meeting with the class, I outlined the course briefly for them, telling them that they would be involved in an English course considerably different from any they had had in the past, but one which had been taught elsewhere and had been received with enthusiasm by the students. The initial reaction of the class was mixed, ranging from interest and enthusiasm, through wary curiosity, to disappointment. The latter extreme seemed based primarily on the fact that there would be many different texts used, instead of the one basic anthology that most of the other twelfth-grade classes were using.

Project English is, of course, comprised of the three concerns: literature, language, and composition. These areas are considerably interrelated, with the main emphasis on the literature; each of the other two elements is emphasized at various points throughout the year. For the sake of clarity, I will deal with the whole of each in turn.

Literature

The objective of any literature course should include the following: (1) comprehension of the literature read, both on the literal and secondary levels; (2) ability and facility to relate reciprocally the literature to the student's own experience; (3) appreciation for good literature, and an understanding of some of the principles of critical evaluation of works of literature. Two further objectives embodied in the twelfth-grade Project English course are: (4) the understanding of genre; (5) an awareness of the mainstream of English literature.

Achievement of the first objective was only partially realized. The sheer quantity of the reading was too great for almost all of the students, including here the college-bound. Certain daily reading assignments of forty to sixty pages had to be cut even more than in half for this group of students. In order to allow time for the individual reading assignments, four works were omitted from the course; even so, the students had difficulty in keeping up with the assignments. The root of this problem seemed to lie in the lack of reading ability and the lack of motivation on the part of the students, excluding the college-bound, to do the assignments. Many of the students held part-time jobs and allotted very little time outside of school for homework.

When the assignments were reduced to a feasible size, comprehension on the literal level increased. Evaluation of student performance in this area was measured by brief reading quizzes following almost every reading assignment. Considerable class time, however, was still needed, to clarify the material read. The questions for class discussion provided in the Project English curriculum generally began at a point beyond that where the students' reading, both in terms of their abilities and their background experiences, had brought them. It was almost always necessary, therefore, to start discussion well within the "facts" of the material, and to proceed in very small steps to the discussion of the questions provided.

Comprehension beyond the literal level was much more difficult to achieve. Motivations behind the characters' actions, inter-relationships among the characters, effect of setting on a particular scene or on the piece of literature as a whole, tone, symbolism, themes--these elements seemed totally alien to the students. The problem centered in getting the students to see a work in different perspectives, or in terms of the relationship of one part to another and of a part to the whole. The discussion questions provided by the Project English course emphasized these elements, and it was necessary, as with the establishment of facts, to work very slowly, using perhaps ten questions to reach one of the Project questions. There was no real improvement in ability in this area over the course of the year; the students never did reach the point where they could do this kind of analysis on their own, or even with only a minimum of guidance; they continued to need painstaking help from the teacher.

The problem of detecting tone, particularly satire and irony, in a piece of literature was an impossible one to overcome. Even GULLIVER'S TRAVELS was to the students only a children's fantasy, and any ultimate acceptance of the work as satire resulted from acceptance of the teacher's word. A continuing effort throughout the year to combat this problem may have had some results with a few students, but the problem remained a serious one.

The difficulty in meeting the second objective--the ability and facility to relate reciprocally the literature to the student's own experience--is closely related to the first. Probable reasons for this difficulty were the students' (1) relatively limited nature of real experiences; (2) lack of imagination; (3) reluctance to look beyond the printed page to see universal applications. The students tended to read everything in the specific: if the setting is England in 1840, the action couldn't take place in America in 1965; and if the character is Scoby, he and his problems couldn't have any relevance to Joe Smith and his life. An extreme example of this literal approach to the literature may be seen in the utter disbelief that Boccaccio and Chaucer were not actually reporters, recording the facts of the journeys and the tales told them. And in the eyes of these students, history is particular, relevant only to the time, place, action, and characters immediately involved.

An evaluation of the success in meeting the objective of instilling in the students an appreciation for good literature, and an understanding of some of the principles of critical evaluation, might be made by answering the following questions: (1) did the students derive enjoyment, satisfaction, and stimulation from the literature? (2) if so, did the students understand why they reacted thus to the literature? (3) would the students willingly, in the future, be able to make such evaluations for themselves?

In general, the students did indeed claim to have been stimulated by, and did profess interest and enjoyment in, the works read in the course--after the fact. That is, the actual reading and discussing of the literature was obviously quite painful to the students; however, when questioned later about the works, they reacted strongly. Although a few students stated bluntly that none of the works read were at all appealing to a "teen-ager," most seemed ultimately in favor of the selections as a whole. The favorites were FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD and WUTHERING HEIGHTS; the poetry, especially PARADISE LOST, was least liked. Almost all the works appeared both on the "best liked" and "least liked" lists drawn up by the students, which suggests that the literature is well-chosen in that it does, at least, create some sort of an impact.

It is improbable that more than a minimum of groundwork was laid in enabling the students to see both why they might have liked a particular work and why that work is considered worthy of study. Again, the problem lay in the reading of the literature in its specifics and in the reluctance to see universal qualities. And although the question of future reading is purely speculative, it is unlikely that these students will select this category of reading material, if they do continue to read. In future reading, it is probable that they will select current "popular" works, on the basis that the reading is more relevant and "easier." Since the majority of these students did very little reading, if any, outside of the required works, and since this tendency did not change during the year, it is reasonable to assume that this pattern will not change to any extent after formal schooling years.

To give the students an awareness of the British contribution to the realm of literature is an objective implicit in the selection of the materials read, but not explicit in the study of these materials. There was no attempt to compare the English literature with the American or World literatures, or to study the historical development of a national literature. In these terms, the students were made cognizant of this area of literature simply by coming in contact with it. They drew their own comparisons between English and American literature on the basis that they see England as a foreign country, its people alien.

The element of genre is both implicit in the arrangement of the works into units and explicit in the study, comparison, and contrast of the works.

Here, a valid question might be: if the problems are so great within the works, is this step perhaps beyond the ken of the students and an optional addition that is not as essential as some of the elements above? The answer would appear to be yes, in that the actual reception of this element was perfunctory and superficial; an understanding of the differences between forms was limited to the obvious, and the learning of these differences accomplished as a prescribed proof to a theorem might be. Any understanding of the reasons behind the differences, the uses for the various forms, and the limitation of each was only partially realized.

At this point, a discussion of the extreme difficulties with the poetry in the curriculum is in order. There is a built-in barrier to poetry in these students, and it is essential that this barrier be removed before any favorable response can be achieved. The problems in this area are the same as in the other areas of literature, but greatly intensified. Thus, there is even greater urgency here to begin with those poems that have the most immediate relevancy, and to delay--if not put off entirely--a consideration of the variou types of poetry. Inexplicably, the greatest immediate reaction came from T. S. Eliot's poetry.

The approach of the course, in all its phases, is through the use of the inductive method. This means that the reading assignments are followed by class discussion, in which the teacher attempts to elicit the important points from the class; the class is guided to its own discovery of the meanings involved. One problem with the questions provided by the curriculum has already been discussed--that of the necessity to start further back and to proceed slowly. There are several others, as well.

The use of this method for discussion of the literature is particularly difficult at the start of the course. Most of the students have had little, if any, experience in this type of classroom procedure, and they actually resent being held responsible for class discussion. They are unhappy, too, with not being told the one "right" answer to all questions. On the other hand, they especially need this kind of experience, and once they are accustomed to it, they do seem to benefit from it. It seems wise to start the process slowly at first, relying some of the time on more traditional approaches

The students also become bored with a steady diet of this method, or with any one method, for that matter; they need variety. Such things as group projects to delineate a character, individual talks prepared in advance on some aspect of a work, panel discussions, debates, and student leadership of a session worked well to provide the change sometimes necessary, while still covering the essential material in the lesson plans. Helpful, too, was to give the group a number of questions to think through before the discussion

These students responded well, too, to the few audio-visual aids used in the program. Much more of this kind of outside stimulation is necessary for this group, for the same reason that the variety of techniques outlined above, and supplementary material on the author and times are necessary. Project English is based on the very valid tenet that the justification for studying any work should reside solely within that work, or it becomes not the study of literature, but the study of something else. The justification for this recommendation for these supplementary materials is that any aid, as long as it is kept in its proper perspective, that stimulates interest and genuine participation in the study of a piece of literature, should be used--if it works. When dealing with students who do not see the inherent worth in studying a piece of literature, or who are not motivated by the faith that they need to do this in preparation for college, such techniques or "gimmicks" are essential.

Composition

The objectives of the composition units may be broadly said to be: (1) the organization and discipline of thought; (2) the increased ability to handle complex writing problems; (3) the increased technical proficiency in putting ideas on paper. Specific writing assignments ranged from single-paragraph to multi-paragraph papers; topics involved comparison, persuasion, and analysis; and skills concerned precise wording and careful organization. All of the writing was based on the literature read, and the topics were limited, although some choice was allowed in many cases. There was no creative writing or topics based on personal experiences.

The area of composition met with considerable success. When asked at the end of the year what they had found most helpful and/or interesting, most students chose this area. Their reasons were two. First, they felt that (for the first time for many) they were being asked to write on something worthwhile. A glance at papers the students had written in former years showed such topics as "The Day I was at A Baseball Game," "My Favorite Hobby," and, of course, the annual "Autobiography" and book reports. The experience of being asked to express opinions and make judgments on the literature, through the papers, seemed to give the students more confidence in doing these same things in the class discussions. Also, as they learned to discipline their thoughts, because of the limited topics, they tended to focus more on the important points in the discussions. And the implication that if they were asked to express an important idea, then their ideas must be worth reading, gave a needed impetus to overcome their feelings of inadequacy in dealing with the "difficult" literature.

Second, the students could see definite improvement in their writing and in their thinking as the year progressed, particularly in terms of organization and support of argument. Especially helpful to the students here was the work on those writing errors that were actually seen to be a problem in the compositions. They benefited, too, from seeing their compositions reproduced for the class to read and took greater care in their writing when they realized that someone other than the teacher might see it. The concept of reader audience, developed in this and the language units, took on more meaning when they knew their papers would be read and criticized by their classmates. Particularly good for the evaluation of their own and others' papers were the paper analysis sheets drawn up for use in the tenth-grade Project English course.

The students did wish, however, that they might have had more freedom in choice of topics and some experience in more creative writing. The latter should, I feel, be incorporated into the course. Since it is so difficult to persuade the students to give personal reactions and to relate the literature to their own experience, in class discussion, and since they are so unsure of their basic writing abilities, a slight addition of purely expressive or imaginative writing might help.

More time, too, must be allotted for work on basic errors in mechanics, such as spelling, punctuation, and sentence structure. The composition units of the Project English course assume a high degree of competency in these areas, but the writing of these students is at a much lower level. The two days provided in the curriculum for particular class problems are not enough for this group, especially when so much extra time is needed for the literature. The method of working directly from duplicated copies of the students' own compositions in dealing with these errors is a good one, provided that one problem at a time is handled, and that the students can sense a progression and unity in the handling of these mechanical problems.

The topics themselves were capable of being handled by these students, as long as the writing of the compositions was preceded by sufficient preparation and discussion (again often more than provided by the curriculum), and if the teacher did not expect great depths of perception. The very challenge of the topics provoked enthusiasm and interest in the writing of the compositions.

There should be, however, more writing assignments in the course. The curriculum calls for a composition approximately every two weeks. This constitutes a bare minimum for any English course; and when the pace of the work is slowed for reasons cited earlier, this means a paper was written only every three to four weeks, which was not sufficient. This gap might be filled, as I filled it with these students, by inserting a variety of shorter, less complex compositions, to provide the additional writing experiences and, at the same time, to enable the students to use a more basic step-by-step progression in the development of their writing skills.

Language

The language area of the Project English course is divided into five units, the first three of which deal with the history of the English language. The students found these three interesting and stimulating. Although they began their study of the language with drudgery and the memorization of facts, they became engrossed in the subject in spite of themselves by the time they reached the Modern English unit.

The Middle English section, the first of the three in order of presentation, followed a study of Chaucer; and the Old English, second in order, was preceded by a study of BEOWULF. This relationship of the language with the literature strengthened the interest in the subject and paved the way for insights into the language of Shakespeare and Milton.

The Modern English unit assumes an understanding of levels of usage and a modern concept of "correctness" in language, as well as an awareness of connotations in language. These ideas, stressed in the tenth- and eleventh-grade courses of Project English, were alien to these students, and an introduction to these concepts needed to be made at this point. More even in these areas should probably be covered if the students have not had the previous years' work.

The fourth unit in the language sequence concerns rhetoric and genre. Its primary purpose is to lay groundwork for the concept of audience developed in the fifth and sixth units. In doing so, it is, perhaps necessarily, sketchy and superficial in two areas where considerably more study might be done. Even further skimming resulted in the use of this unit in this experiment, from the fact that the unit draws upon material covered in an eleventh-grade language unit and upon works read in all three years of the Project English course. For this particular group of students, this surface coverage was probably sufficient, in that it made them aware of these matters, without involving them too deeply in admittedly complex and specialized areas which they would have been unable to handle.

The fifth language unit further developed the concept of audience primarily through the use of advertising. (This concept was to be broadened in the sixth unit, through the analysis of passages from the literature read in the course, to an awareness of audience in general; this final unit, however, was not available for use in this experiment.) This unit did not succeed at all, because it called for a sophistication utterly lacking in these students. The questions calling for differentiation between audiences of particular magazines and newspapers, for example, could not be answered, because the students were only remotely familiar with these periodicals. In the same way, the questions concerning the advertisements necessitated an understanding of shadings of meaning and a realization of snob appeal and romanticism, elements alien to the experiences of these students. Yet these students, in their tendency to read advertisements as compilations of facts, are especially in need of such a unit; but the approach must be different.

Conclusions

The choice of works to be read in the literature units of the course is generally a good one, but the quantity of reading must be greatly reduced; thus, a number of works must be eliminated. The addition of modern, easier-to-read works--perhaps some short stories--would provide the students with a greater sense of the relevancy of literature to life. This might be particularly effective at the very beginning of the course, where impact, interest, and enthusiasm are especially needed in order to draw the students into the course. The poetry units, however, need to be completely re-worked, bearing in mind that we are dealing with students who have developed a dislike to poetry in general, and--at least here--are products of an urban society, children often of laborers, realists, and, thus, who have little affinity for Wordsworth's nature and Keats' urn.

The objectives of the study of the literature are only partially realizable. The depth of perception and subtlety of understanding cannot be reached by these students. They can only be brought to slightly deeper insights than they were able to achieve in the past, and be made aware of a body of good literature, as an addition to their total educational experience. It may be hoped, but should not be expected, that these achievements may influence their future reading, both in terms of quantity and quality.

The methods used in aiming for these objectives are perhaps the most successful element of the program. Although there is initial rebellion at being expected to make their own discoveries and draw on their own conclusions, this reaction of the students gives way eventually to a sense of satisfaction and accomplishment, as well as to more meaningful learning. As a side effect, the students gain confidence in the worth of their ideas and lose some of their fear of "literature." The lamentable aspect of this success is that it comes so late in the year; earlier familiarity with the inductive method could be a great help. Also, however valuable the discussion method might be, it must be varied, through the use of other techniques, and supplemented by outside materials, in order to get and maintain the interest of the students.

The composition units are extremely successful both in method and objectives attained, and require only slight modifications. These recommended modifications include: (1) additional time for presentation and discussion of the composition assignments; (2) additional time for work on errors in mechanics; (3) additional writing assignments of a shorter, less complex nature; (4) inclusion of a few creative writing assignments. A special value of the composition units lies in their reinforcement of a contribution to the kind of thinking about the literature that is stressed in that area.

The language units dealing with the history of the English language are successful, and the only modification suggested here might be in greater depth in the story of this area, since the student interest is high and the study relatively shallow. The other units, dealing with rhetoric, genre, and audience, are totally unsuccessful and need either to be re-worked in terms of these students or eliminated entirely.

III. EVALUATION OF THE EXPERIMENT IN TERMS OF THE TEACHER

Introduction

As an "outside" teacher, untrained in the specific use of the Project English materials, I was momentarily overwhelmed by the scope of the curriculum. The factors working in my behalf, however, were my deep interest and strong background in English literature, and my past experience both in teaching a traditional English literature course and in using inductive methods of teaching. Without these factors, I think that the teaching of this experimental program would have been extremely difficult. Thus, I recommend that in the selection of "outside" teachers to handle this course, these factors be strongly considered.

Literature

The sheer weight of the material covered in the literature course is a challenge, one which affords the teacher a chance to work with complex material, much of which he has probably not dealt with before. As such, it can be approached in one of two ways: (1) as a quantity so great, it can be only quickly read and lightly assimilated; (2) as a chance to deepen the teacher's own background in literature, while teaching truly worthwhile material. The former approach is the dangerous one, of course, but one which is actually aided by the questions and objectives outlined in the course; thus it is essential that the teacher selected to teach the course be one who would not be likely to follow this approach. In terms of the second approach, the questions and objectives can be a definite aid for preparation. In any case, it is imperative that the teacher take sufficient preparation time, both before and during the teaching of the course, to insure against superficial understanding of the works.

The outside teacher must also understand that the discussion questions provided in the curriculum are not to be taken as verbatim procedure. Specific note should be made that these questions are merely to serve as guides for the discussions, and that the important factor is that the points so delineated be stressed. The teacher must adapt these questions, and the whole procedure, if necessary, to meet the needs of the individual classes. In this sense, the program calls for a teacher with a high degree of flexibility, as well as a thorough grounding in the literature of the curriculum. It is easy to see where a teacher might follow the whole curriculum, step-by step, unless such a warning is issued. Since the answers to all questions, which the developers of the curriculum had in mind when they devised the questions, are not given, the teacher must be sure that he knows what he is striving for in any given discussion and must work out for himself the best procedure for eliciting the desired responses. This is not to say that the procedure is to be disregarded, but rather that it is to be used judiciously.

This same flexibility, or adaptability, is necessary in any use of inductive teaching. Since the students are making their own discoveries and drawing their own conclusions, even though these are the ones the teacher is directing them to, their direction is obviously not always that anticipated by the teacher. It takes skill and experience to cope with this, and ability to guide without dictating.

In lieu of sufficient background in this area of literature, and as an aid--regardless of background--for seeing more closely the particular points stressed in the Project interpretations of the individual works, a selected, suggested bibliography might be included in the course materials. This would offset, too, the inconsistency in the lesson plans in answering the discussion points.

The "outside teacher," when dealing with an average, academic class, must work with the specifics noted in the preceding section on the course in terms of the students. In addition, the reading quizzes must be used with care, since a number of the questions are ambiguous. And, if the course is not being taught in sequence with the tenth- and eleventh-grade Project English courses, all questions relating to materials covered in those years must be eliminated.

Composition

The objectives of the individual composition lessons are clear-cut. It is difficult, however, for the "outside" teacher to see the over-all organization and objectives of the total composition units. These should be made clearer. Additional material, too, that stresses the method of teaching the lessons and evaluating the compositions should be given to the teacher. The writing topics are clear and well-chosen, but more aid in preparing the students for writing them is recommended; and additional, perhaps optional, composition topics to fill in intermediate steps might be made available for those teachers who feel their classes should do more writing.

It might be worth consideration to include, as well, materials dealing with specific mechanical errors likely to be found in the students' writing. There are two valid reasons for this recommendation. First, if the course is taught to average, academic students, there are bound to be a sufficient number of these problems to necessitate the use of considerable class time in dealing with them. If so, then room must be made in the curriculum for these lessons, and the lessons should be an integral part of the total program.

Second, if the objectives of the total Project English program are to be
these lessons should incorporate the ideas included in the two earlier y
particularly the approach of structural linguistics established in the ten
grade course.

Language

The units of the language area that deal with the history of the Engli
language are well-organized, and the lesson plans generally carefully
drawn. There are a few areas where the teacher may have some difficu
however, in dealing with the etomologies of words, for example, the te
should be instructed to consult the dictionary most likely to be used by t
students, since there is some variation in word origins from dictionary
dictionary, and the origins do not always support the generalization the
lesson assumes them to support. The teacher should also prepare hims
for this unit by studying, in much greater depth, the language history.
generalized nature of the units invites many questions from the students
which the teacher must be prepared to answer. Here, again, greater b
ground material for the teacher along with bibliographical suggestions i
recommended.

Perhaps part of the reason that the other language units do not work
for the students is that they are not clearly defined for the teacher. Th
jectives are vague, and the reliance on past Project materials pre-supp
a familiarity with these that most teachers do not have. Again, more i
mation for the "outside" teacher is warranted; although a re-working of
these units, as recommended in terms of the students, might simply in
clude clarification for the teacher.

Conclusions

The over-all structure of the course, and the organization and clarit
the individual units and lessons, is generally ample enough for the "out
teacher to use the course effectively. This teacher, however, should b
above-average, in the sense of background preparation, skills in teachi
flexibility, and interest.

The one basic need is for supplementary materials and bibliographi
deepen and clarify each area of the course, in terms of objectives, me
and background.

IV. SUMMARY

The over-all objectives of the course, and the methods by which these objectives are to be achieved, are generally valid in terms of these students and this teacher. It is strongly recommended, however, that the course be used in accordance with its original conception--that of a sequential, cumulative program, so that the methods become familiar by the twelfth grade, and the objectives stand a better chance of being realized. If the twelfth-grade course must stand alone, and establish the groundwork necessary for each area of the curriculum, then it is impossible, on the basis of this report, to achieve the desired objectives.

The quantity of material is too great for the average, academic student to handle, and must be cut severely. The content is basically right and in need only of some modification--and some lowering of expectation on the part of the teacher.

The teacher can effectively use most of the materials in the course, but needs to be given a greater amount of supplementary material, to offset the lack of training in the use of these materials. Much of this supplementary material should be in the form of suggested bibliographies.

V. APPENDIX

Works Omitted from the Course

SIR GAWAIN AND THE GREEN KNIGHT, translated by Stone

THE HORSE'S MOUTH by Joyce Cary

MAN AND SUPERMAN by George Bernard Shaw

THE COCKTAIL PARTY by T. S. Eliot

Variation on the Discussion Method in Literature

In the study of FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD, the class was divided into groups, each group to study in depth one of the following characters: Bathsheba, Gabriel, Troy, Boldwood. Questions were devised to help the groups in looking at these characters. At the conclusion of their studies, the groups presented their characters to the entire class, through the devices of panel discussions, individual talks, or sketches, and evaluated each other's presentations. The purposes of this departure from the lesson plans were: (1) to provide needed variety in class procedure; (2) to enable the students to understand more deeply a character in fiction and his relevancy to their own lives. The class asserted that they both enjoyed and benefited from this variation. A majority placed this work at the top of their "best liked" lists, drawn up at the end of the year. It seems likely that this technique was a determining factor in that selection.

Excerpts from Students' "Evaluations" of the Course as a Whole

"Most of the novels we read were worthwhile reading material. The section on poetry was not for me. I never did like poetry, and I don't think I ever will.

* * *

"Of the reading, the most helpful was the poetry, although I did not particularly care for it. Least helpful was the study based on the advertisements."

* * *

"The most valuable thing in this class was that it made you 'think' about what you read. The least valuable thing about this class was the poetry."

* * *

"I liked this English class very much. The discussions were usually interesting, and the nature of the talk was informal. I liked reading and writing on the literature."

* * *

"I didn't care for reading the books, but I liked the discussion we had on them. Class participation seemed to pick up as the year progressed. We didn't have enough freedom in choosing topics to write on."

* * *

"In this course, the most important things were the way we expressed our feelings in the discussion and the way we were able to put down our ideas so that someone else could understand them. The most important area was the poetry, although I didn't care for it."

* * *

"The most important part of this course was the knowledge of reading books and learning how to write about them in the form of a theme. The daily quizzes helped a lot, too. The worst part of the course was having to read too many pages every day."

* * *

"This course was one of the nicest English courses I have ever had. It gave me much enjoyable reading, broadened my literary aptitude, increased my knowledge of the interesting works of literature there are to be had. In going through this course, I have come to like reading more and more."

Grade 10
Year 1965-66

PROJECT ENGLISH TENTH-GRADE CURRICULUM STUDY FOR THE AVERAGE ACADEMIC STUDENT AND THE TEACHER WITHOUT SPECIAL PREPARATION

by

Lillian Ryave
July, 1967

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I. INTRODUCTION

This report is a record of my experience and observations as teacher of the tenth-grade Project English curriculum at South Hills High School during the academic year 1965-1966. It attempts to give my answers to two questions of concern to those who seek to assess the value of presenting the course, originally devised for able college-bound students, to average (and, in this case, non-academic) students.

The first question deals with the degree of success achieved in presenting this course, in whole and in its parts, to this class. In the first place, I think that a course like this is as necessary for a student who will not continue his education after high school as for one who will, because the former is not likely ever to have such an opportunity to study such worth-while literature. Of course, the criteria of success will have to be modified for the average student. A proper evaluation of the year's work must take into consideration not merely empirical evidence, such as grades on tests and themes, or even improvement in the skills of reading, writing, and speaking English; the ultimate aims of education are involved in this course, and they have to do with effect on the students as people. As Schweitzer says in his MEMOIRS, "...(N)ot one of us knows what effect (he) produces and what he gives to others...though we are often allowed to see some little fraction of it, so that we may not lose courage." I myself felt encouraged, when at year's end I had the students write papers giving their opinion of the course, and several wrote that they thought that the teacher should allow the class to carry on the class discussions themselves. This was quite a contrast to the group that for most of the year thought that the teacher should do all the work!

The question, "How well did the course go for these students?", even in its wording suggests that the course is not sacred, that its value lies in how it "goes over"--that is, in its ability to reach the students. Also, the question evokes the picture of a theatrical performance, in which the audience is to be beguiled into accepting subtly presented ideas. And, indeed, enjoyment of the literature is the only motivating force that the teacher can count on in impelling the students to do the work. I found that enjoyment increased as the year wore on, not because the later selections were easier or more interesting, but because the students had become better readers and, therefore, better able to respond. If the creation of an atmosphere in which learning can take place is the job of the teacher, I can only say, as Selma Lagerlöf says, in "The Story of a Story," "If it was not properly disciplined and restrained, it was mostly because the author (teacher) was so overjoyed in the thought that at last she had been privileged to write (teach) it."

The second question deals with the helpfulness and adequacy of the materials prepared for a teacher who has neither seen the course previously nor received special instruction in how to present it. I myself had been a substitute teacher in the public school system; therefore, I had a certain amount of experience in dealing with relatively unfamiliar material and with students of every degree of ability. I found the materials as helpful as could be desired. I also found them adequate. Any information of an historical, geographical, or biographical nature that might interest the teacher can be found in easily accessible dictionaries and encyclopedias. What the materials cannot help the teacher with are the decisions of how much work any particular item of the curriculum will be fruitful. Here, as Richards says about translation, "Feeling has to resume supremacy over reflective judgment."

Part of the enjoyment sought by the students comes from finding out what constitutes truth or reality. I was a little startled, however, to get a theme from a student, about the middle of the course, which mentioned dismally something about "growing up and finding out the truth!" I think that if they are to learn the truth at all, we teachers should try to avoid despair or pessimism by presenting other facets of the truth, and this the course attempts to do. After all, if it is true, as T. S. Eliot says, that we "lose widsom in knowledge, knowledge in information," we teachers can at least try to reverse the process.

The Class

The class of twenty-four students included eight boys and sixteen girls, one of whom dropped out of school before the end of the semester. The class was selected at random, although the range of I.Q.'s from 91 to 110, presumably on a group test, established it as a class that was "average for this school." One of the administrators said that the class was "not really made up of students--that is, of scholars." In other words, this was a non-academic group. A supervisor from the Board of Education, who observed one of my lessons on language study, pronounced them a "slow group." Only one student in the class expressed an interest in attending college; she had been recommended by some of her teachers for the School College Orientation Program. It was obvious that the students' sole motivation for expending the effort required for the course would be enjoyment of the work itself and especially of the literature.

Early in the school year, the students were given the Iowa Silent Reading Tests, New Edition; their scores ranged from grade equivalent 5.1 to 13.3. It was apparent that several students' need for remedial reading would hamper their ability to understand or enjoy the course. Thereafter, one class period a week was devoted to a "reading lab," which had as its purpose the improvement of reading skills, with the emphasis on comprehension rather than on speed. I feel that the design of the course and the way in which I taught it made it primarily a reading course, and that the "reading lab" was a reinforcement of skills stressed in the Project English curriculum.

The introductory unit not only introduced the teacher to the difficulties in literature and composition and grammar with which she would have to struggle throughout the year; it also introduced to the students the unprecedented demands that would be made upon them. The first effect upon the students was a shaking-up of their belief that they could read, write, or speak correct English. This regression was necessary before there could be any progression. There were also "plateaus" during the year, during which it seemed as though we were all on "a painted ship, upon a painted ocean." Toward the end of the year, it seemed as though they had reached a saturation point, and therefore I did not feel too much regret at our lack of time to finish all the literature.

The success of the course may be measured in several ways. First of all, after only a few months, the class, when given a difficult poem of W. H. Auden's to read, showed more insight than even the twelfth-grade, advanced-placement class, which was also given the poem to criticize. Also, the class did better than those who took the regular tenth-grade English course, on the reading comprehension test sent by the Board of Education, which was to count for one-fourth of their grades. Other indications of the success of the course could be seen in their increasing enjoyment of the literature (reflecting increasing ability to read), in greater willingness and even desire to participate in class discussions (reflecting greater self-confidence in their ability to comprehend), and greater ease in writing and organizing their compositions (although greater fluency brought with it the danger of colloquialism and slanginess). Also, the group feeling of being co-workers increased. All in all, I feel that, although we did not cover all the material or delve too deeply into some of it, "(a)nother race hath been, and other palms are won."

As for the character of the student body, it seemed to me that they had been encouraged to think of themselves as part of a special group--teenagers--rather than as just people. One administrator, after sitting in on one of my composition lessons (the one in which model themes are studied), said to me, "They're only children!" Moreover, some of the students, especially the girls, expressed a wish that they might be given more stories about teenagers, "people like ourselves." However, nothing human in the literature should have been totally alien to them, and, as it turned out, nothing was.

The first thing the teacher has to do with a group like this is to convince them that literature must be responded to both intellecturally and emotionally. She will have to give examples of how to respond, by expressing her own responses. She must also read aloud certain passages, using the tones of voice suited to expressing the author's intentions; in this way, she can demonstrate how an author uses language not merely for communication, but also for aesthetic effect.

The class showed little sensitivity to, or enjoyment of, wordplay, as it appeared in A CHILD'S CHRISTMAS IN WALES, in the nonsense-words used in the language lessons, or even in the remedial reading lessons. It seemed as though the seriousness they lacked as conscientious students was displaced onto an area in which a sense of humor was required.

The class showed a high interest in the characters in the literature, and particularly in the motivation of the characters. They were especially interested in the different roles that society imposes on men and women. They displayed a humane open-mindedness toward the characters: for example, Carmen was thought of as unconventional rather than contemptible. There was a lack of embarrassment in discussion of sexual behavior as it appeared in the literature, even when the behavior was unorthodox, as it was, for example, in "In a Grove," (which deals with rape), and in THE CRADLE SONG, (which touches on the subject of illegitimacy.) The class made me think, many times, of Schweitzer's words about idealism in his MEMOIRS: "If all of us could become what we were at fourteen, what a different place the world would be!"

The amount of interest in ideas in the literature varied, according to what group each could identify with; a hush seemed to fall on the class whenever any one group of people was referred to, whether the group was Negro, (as in "Tell Freedom"), whether the group was female (in all the stories concerning the role of women), or whether it was boys nearing draft age (as in ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT).

Like I. A. Richards, I found that "the real enemy I contend(ed) with is a taste for noise,"--that is, a taste not only for noise in its literal sense, but a taste for "noise" as being formlessness and meaninglessness. The lesson plans for the course reveal that, as Richards says of his translation of THE ILIAD, a "certain simplification" has been imposed on the material in the three areas of study, (literature, composition, and language study), and a "certain generality" has been imposed on the class discussions. I believe that both the simplification and generalization are successful in helping to diminish the "noise."

The Teacher

I see the role of the teacher as similar to the role of the translator described by I. A. Richards, in the introduction to his version of THE ILIAD. He compares the interaction between Homer (the author) and the reader (the student) to a communications system, in which the translator (the teacher) transmits what he takes from the author (his reading of the piece of literature), through a signal (the course) to the receiver (the student's intellect) and thence to the destination (an effect upon the student as a whole person).

The teacher must, in some ways, identify with all the persons in the process. He must identify with the authors: that is, he must read sympathetically and with comprehension. He must identify with the devisers of the course: that is, he must share their aims as specialists in English, literature, and education. He must identify with the students, so that he can try to remove the barriers between them and the authors.

I myself received the books and teaching materials the summer before I was to teach the course. I read the literature and language study lessons, took the quizzes and tests, just as the students would. There is a certain advantage in having even a slight familiarity with the literature. However, I think that it is not necessary, because it is only after working with the class for a while that the teacher can make decisions as to what lessons to modify, what deletions to make, and what changes to make, if any. For example, it was only after I saw that my class had difficulty understanding the story "The Bet," that I decided to read to them another story, or essay, that might clarify it. I chose Thomas Wolfe's story, "God's Lonely Man." I do think , however, that the more times the teacher reads any of the pieces of literature, the more understanding she will have of it. Above all, the teacher always comes into contact not merely with a homogeneous group or class; she also comes into contact with a series of individuals. If she starts with a thorough understanding of the material, she can devote her time to reaching all of them.

II. THE COURSE

Time Allotment

I attempted to follow the daily lesson plans and to allot the time suggested for each item. I found, however, that we would not be able to cover every item during the year, because, for most of the year, one period a week was devoted to the "reading lab" given to all tenth-graders, and because some of the longer items, such as novels and plays, required more days spent on class discussions. When I realized, toward the end of the year, that we would not be able to cover all the material, I decided to assign only one piece of literature from the unit on Human Weakness, (THE MISER,) and one piece of literature from the unit on The Search for Wisdom, (Schweitzer's MEMOIRS OF CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH,) so that the class could have all the lessons on language study. As to the amount of time devoted to the various items, there were complaints from the students about some of the long reading assignments; furthermore, each language study lesson took only one day, and those who missed one, or failed to understand one, had no opportunity to have the lesson repeated. I tried breaking up some of the reading assignments into smaller portions; and I tried repeating a couple of the language study lessons. However, I found that those who did not do the reading when the assignment was long, did not do it when it was shorter; and those who did not understand the language study lessons the first time, did not understand them when they were repeated. Therefore, I would recommend that the teacher stick to the time schedule as suggested for homework (although spending, when necessary, more days on class discussion) and going on to the next lesson, rather than spending fruitless time on any one item.

I felt that it was a loss to the class that we did not have time for the story "As the Night, the Day," because it provided a nice balance to the story "Tell Freedom," showing that racial prejudice is not confined to any one race. Had there been more time, I would have given priority to the Biblical selections and to the dialogues of Socrates, by Plato, because the previous reading experience indicated that the more ancient literature, THE ILIAD and the BIBLE selections, were the most successful. I would also include parts of WIND, SAND AND STARS. The chapter, "Prisoner of the Sand," is a complete adventure story in itself and is probably the only section that the class would be able to read. I would read aloud in class parts of the chapter on "The Tool," and explain it, because most of this book would be unintelligible to the average class. I think the novel, THE PLAGUE, would be unsuitable to an average or below-average class.

When limitations of time make it necessary to delete certain items, I think that those items that deal with the literary process itself, such as "A Character in Distress" and "The Story of a Story" may be omitted without loss. I would also omit the selections from PLUTARCH'S LIVES; they held no interest for the students, and their chief interest would surely be to those who desire to see how Shakespeare transformed Plutarch's writings and to those who desire to compare historical with dramatic writing.

In each of the units there is one piece of literature that contains ideas that should be thoroughly explained and understood, aside from the main idea around which each unit is built. In the introductory unit, "The Bet" raises the issue of what constitutes experience. The lesson plans, wrongly I think, refer to the prisoner's experiences, both intellectual and emotional, as "vicarious." I think it is necessary to make clear to the class that reading experience or the experience of responding to any work of art is real experience. This is especially important for a class like mine, that felt acutely their lack of worldly experience, and had disturbing doubts about the relevance to themselves of what seemed to them like a barrage of material to be "learned." As one boy said, "We'll probably forget everything we've read, anyway." It should be shown to them that meaningful experience, intellectural and emotional, effects a change in the attitudes or character of the experiencer.

In Unit I, on social concerns, the play AN ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE merits detailed analysis of its ideas and of the ideas held at different times by its hero, Dr. Stockmann.

In Unit II, on love, the play THE CRADLE SONG requires and should have extra time allotted to it to clarify what it says about the similarities and differences between human love and divine love. This clarification would shed light on other selections in the unit, particularly on the religious poems that show divine love as a personal relationship.

In Unit III, on reality and illusion, the story "Maya" should have extra time allotted to it, for explanation of the symbolism, the analogies, and the myths referred to, especially those having to do with the idea of "Maya" as supernatural creative power, and those having to do with Romulus and Remus. The story has much to say about reality as a kind of illusion, about illusion as a kind of reality, and about the coexistence of the two, just as there is coexistence of good and evil and coexistence of life and death. In particular, what the story says about the great illusions of art, religion, and love will illuminate the other items in the unit.

In Unit IV, on heroism, detailed analysis of the characters in JULIUS CAESAR is in order, first to establish the fact that the term "heroic," that has come to be a term of approbation, has often been a a synonym for ruthlessness. It was of interest to me that the class considered Brutus to be the hero of the play, in spite of the fact that Shakespeare thought of Caesar himself as the hero. (As early as the reading of the novel A TALE OF TWO CITIES, the class differed from the author in the character they took to be the hero: they did not see Sidney Carton as a heroic figure.) The entire concept of heroism depends upon the fact that men have at times acted upon the idea that allegiance to some code is more important than human life, their own or that of their "enemies." Analysis of what constitutes a code of honor to the characters in JULIUS CAESAR will illuminate the ideas of codes of honor from codes of chivalry in the medieval myths to codes of "honor among thieves" in "Mateo Falcone," in which, incidentally, the name of the title character is important. (The latter story should lead to a discussion of capital punishment in general.) For a discussion of the heathen-Germanic warrior ethic, to be compared with other ideals of heroism, I would recommend to the teacher the chapter "The Ideal of Kingship in Beowulf," in AN ANTHOLOGY OF BEOWULF CRITICISM, edited by Lewis E. Nicholson. It would be interesting to decide upon a modern hero who might lend himself to legend.

In Unit V, on human weakness, my class read only THE MISER, and therefore the discussion concerned all the human weaknesses revealed in the play, such as love of flattery, self-deception, and the feeling of possessiveness toward people, such as that of parents toward their children, as well as possessiveness toward material things.

In Unit VI, on the search for wisdom, my class read only Schweitzer's MEMOIRS OF CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH. However, this autobiography reveals the fact that it is the search for one's roots, for the state of mind in which one feels at home with himself and his world, that is a conscious and unconscious motivating force in man; that when man finds his roots he finds himself, and that when he finds himself, he finds his roots again; that every such finding is a refinding. The MEMOIRS also show the different forms that wisdom may take, thus helping the understanding of other selections in this unit. It would also be of interest to study the MEMOIRS as an example of the literary form known as autobiography and to notice the amount of selectivity the author exercises in choosing and using his material. Furthermore, the class will note that nothing in the MEMOIRS accounts for the greatness of Schweitzer, but that his greatness accounts for the interest in his early life.

Recommendations

In deciding whether this course and this "average" class were suitable for each other, I would have to answer the question of how much the course can be changed (chiefly by deletion of many pieces of the literature) and still deserve to be called Project English. I felt that each of the students had gained some of what was intended by the course. Scores on a reading comprehension test bore this out. I would recommend, however, that stricter selectivity of students be exercised; that an I.Q. of 100 be set as the absolute minimum.

To the teacher of average students I recommend the following:

1. In a class discussion at the end of each unit, tie together the literary selections in that unit, in order to leave the students with a unified idea underlying the various facets of the area of human life under discussion.

2. Incorporate the language study lessons in rewriting the class themes.

3. Arrange, if possible, to have a private conference with each student after the class has written several themes.

4. Include, if possible, a paper-back dictionary with the books given to each student, since difficulties with vocabulary and spelling are so great.

5. Insist that students use notebooks (all of mine were issued a notebook) in which to record assignments, new vocabulary additions, and important points brought out in class discussion.

III. EVALUATION

Parts That Went Well

Because arousing and maintaining enough interest to make the students read the homework assignments were problems, the shorter selections, such as poems and short stories, which could be read at one sitting, were most successful in this respect. Since one of the characteristics of a short story is a total effect, these two literary forms had the most immediate impact on the students.

The most interesting language study lesson was the lesson on case, in which examples from Latin and Old English were given.

Next to the Biblical selections, which evokes an interest in information about the English Bible in general, the most successful piece of literature was THE ILIAD, judging by its ability to inspire even apathetic students to write themes about it.

The most successful of the class theme subjects, judging by the pleasure that students took in writing them, were the two that asked their opinions: the one that asked whether Andreevich, in "Master and Man" satisfied their concept of a hero, and the one that asked whether the trait of miserliness in Harpagon, in THE MISER, was so exaggerated that they lost belief in the reality of his character. The class obviously felt that they could be more subjective in these themes, as in the paper on their own celebration of a holiday, than in the other expository themes.

Parts That Went Poorly

I felt least satisfied with the students' work on the Language Study Lessons. It seemed that they understood these lessons only when they could connect them with previous training in the parts of speech: that is, a fragmentary learning of separate words and their definitions, rather than understanding of the sentence as a complete thought. This fragmentation was revealed not only in the Language Study homework, but in the class themes, by the use of dangling participles, sentence fragments, and run-on sentences. There seemed to be a lack of regard for accuracy or precision, whether in respect to rules of grammar, punctuation, or spelling; they felt that my correction of these was mere carping. It must be pointed out to them that, even though the rules of grammar are derived from usage, which itself is continually changing somewhat, at any particular time there are standards of literacy. I suspect that their difficulties in usage are partly due to their reading problems and partly due to difficulties in reasoning, by which the rules of grammar are arrived at.

When I asked students to read aloud individually certain important passages from the literature, or to read aloud, in groups, scenes from some of the plays, I saw that their lack of familiarity with, and inability to pronounce many fairly common words made this an unsatisfactory teaching device. Furthermore, I noted that those who were not reading aloud were inattentive to those who were; therefore, I think that the teacher will have to do most of this kind of reading.

The Introductory Unit was interesting but difficult, because it introduced them to the problems they would face all year: the quizzes showed them that they would have to read with unaccustomed care and comprehension; the class theme showed them that they would have to master expository form and organization; and the language study showed them that language, which they used as a means of critical analysis, is itself analyzable.

Works of literature that presented difficulties were "The Stream of Days," because of the lengthy descriptions of setting and A TALE OF TWO CITIES, partly because of the difficulty of the vocabulary. A CHILD'S CHRISTMAS IN WALES was not as successful as I expected it to be, because these students failed to appreciate the word-play. I think they got more out of the poem when they heard it read aloud on the recording by the author; they were made aware of the importance of the sound, or music, of poetry.

The philosophical part of the poem "Taj Mahal" presented such difficulties, that I found it best to spend most of the time for that day's discussion on _I Corinthians_, Ch. 13.

In general, the African and Oriental stories and, especially, the poems, were the most difficult, because of the unfamiliarity of the setting and some of the ideas.

IV. THE AREAS OF STUDY

Organization of the Literature

The literature is divided into an introductory unit and six units each of which has, as its title and primary subject matter, an idea or theme that has concerned man over a wide expanse of place and time. The place is roughly the area that is the home of "Western" or European culture (although African and Oriental literature is included for comparison and contrast.) The time expanse extends from modern writing back to examples of the earliest written composition, some of which still shows vestiges of the oral composition that preceded it. The themes or ideas are not limited to the units into which they are grouped, but the division has been made with the following classifications in mind:

Units I, II, and III show man's attitude toward others, another, or his world, Unit I, Social Concerns, reveals man's attitudes toward his human environment and the ways in which they are formed by that environment. Unit II, Love, reveals man's emotions. Unit III, Reality and Illusion, reveals man's thoughts, what he half-perceives and half-creates. Units IV, V, and VI show man's actions, particularly in pursuit of what he values. Unit IV, Heroism, shows man as he identifies his welfare with that of a country, tribe, religion, ruler, code of honor, or mankind in general, pursuing power over what opposes it. Unit V, Human Weakness, shows man as he identifies his welfare with the possession of land, wealth, or status--that is, with material and worldly power. Unit VI, The Search for Wisdom, implies in its title, the idea that wisdom is not a static thing, but a process. It shows man as he consciously and unconsciously pursues an ideal, whether that be conceived as a person, place, or state of mind. It is a search the end of which finds man in possession of power over himself, rather than being possessed by power.

The aim of this organization of the literature is to make the students conscious of ideas and values in the culture of which they are an active and passive part. Another aim is to promote in the students a critical attitude toward these ideas--that is, an objective understanding and evaluation of these ideas and of the forms they have taken in different places and times. (An example is the chauvinistic and religious propaganda that is in some of the medieval myths.) One of the aims of the literature is the formation of taste. The criteria of excellence in the literature are their continuing relevance through time, which has brought about changes in the forms of some of the selections, and their relevance to all men, which has brought about their translation into other languages.

I would suggest to the teacher that at the end of each unit, which shows different facets of the main idea, she point out the underlying unity. For example, she can point out that the term Social Concerns refers to people living together in various organized groups. A TALE OF TWO CITIES deals with political groups; "Biryuk" and "Rashomon," with economic groups; "Chastity," with a group holding certain moral values; "Golden Bells," "Remembering Golden Bells," and "My Lord, the Baby," with groups organized along the lines of social stratification (that is, with superior value being accorded to males and to aristocracy); "Return: Two Poems" and "Tell Freedom" with racial groups; AN ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE, with a civic group; "The Prisoner" and "The Dwarf Trees," with national groups; ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT, with a military, that is a professional group. While all these groups offer some gain to the individual, they nevertheless serve to separate him from those outside the group. A CHILD'S CHRISTMAS IN WALES shows the family as the ideal social group and the home as the ideal institution: it demonstrates the essence of the Christmas message--that the institution exists for the individuals in it and that individuals do not exist merely to serve an institution.

I think it should be pointed out to the students that the introductory unit contains examples of the ideas into which the six main units are divided: "Old Milon" deals with heroism; "The Stranger's Note" deals with love; "The Stream of Days" deals with social concerns; "The Bet" deals with both human weakness and the search for wisdom. Through all these stories runs the desire to distinguish reality from illusion.

The introductory unit also serves the purpose of introducing the idea of form, for the purpose both of communication and of esthetic effect. The literature shows form in the short story or chapter. The composition lessons show form in exposition. The language study lessons show form in the structure of language itself: from the functional form of words, the structural form of sentences, and the organizational form of paragraphs. The importance of form, I think, should be made explicity plain to the students, perhaps with examples from art forms other than literature.

Language Study

I consider the language study lessons so important, that I recommend to all teachers of this course that they complete all these lessons even if it means deleting some of the literature. Actually, the authors of the literature should be the greatest "teaching aids," but the teacher of a class like mine will find the authors as linguistically inaccessible to the class as though they were writing in a foreign language. The purpose of the language study is to help the class both in reading and in composition.

These lessons differ from the students' previous lessons in grammar as algebra differs from arithmetic. The students have a fragmentary knowledge of isolated "parts of speech" but little understanding of the relationship, according to function, among words. It is important to stress the fact that the rules are derived from usage. The relevation that they are, in fact, (and especially in correct speech) using the "rules of grammar" should be as reassuring as it was to the man in the anecdote to discover that he had been speaking prose all his life. I think that the greatest barrier to success of these lessons is the attitude of the students toward them: they feel that, since they "know" the parts of speech and how to diagram a sentence, they know English. An advantage of these lessons is that few technical linguistic terms are used. After all, these are not students of linguistics as much as they are users (and misusers) of English.

One way to arouse some interest in language--at least in words--is to give a lesson, such as the one my class requested, on the origins and meanings of their names. A book that the teacher might use as a point of departure is WORD ORIGINS AND THEIR ROMANTIC STORIES, by Wilfred Funk. (Incidentally, in tracing the origin of the origin of the word "colossal," Mr. Funk quotes from the play JULIUS CAESAR; and in his notations on the words "hector" and "pander," he refers to THE ILIAD.) I think the students' interest in the evolution of words can be transferred to an interest in the evolution of language and of usage.

Composition

For teaching the literature the class themes are not merely testing tools but teaching tools. The teacher should so guide the class discussions which precede and prepare the class for the writing of the papers that the idea contained in the unit is clear, the relevant details are mentioned, and the topic of the paper is explained and narrowed. The purpose of the preceding is the clarification of what is to be expected in the content of the paper; the student can then direct his attention and efforts to the organization and literateness of his paper. Even when the paper is to be written on one literary selection, the topic calls for a complete understanding of all the others, as facets of the unifying idea. My class wrote the first thirteen themes for which topics were suggested. I do not think that the topics of the fourteenth, a comparison of the concepts of Schweitzer and Saint-Exupery, or of the fifteenth, the search for wisdom of a character from THE PLAGUE, are suitable for an average class like mine. Examples of difficulties of comprehension of the topics for composition were:

Class paper I	Many students mistook a physical characteristic or characteristics for the required character trait or quality of character of "Old Milon".
Class Paper II	Many, instead of giving a character trait of a person in A TALE OF TWO CITIES, gave a moralistic epithet, like "sneaky," or a superficial judgment, like "a perfect lady."
Class paper III	Many thought the statement that life was "physically hard" meant that the children were beaten, given physical punishment, that "physical" refers to the body, rather than to the world of nature and survival in it.
Class paper IV	It should be made clear to the students that "social" environment does not refer to gatherings for the purpose of entertainment; also, that the "social environment" of Paul in ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT does not refer to his life and friendships in the army, but in his environment before joining.

Class paper V	For this paper on a holiday scene, I suggested New Year's Eve or Day. However, since most of them do not celebrate this holiday with special festivities, I allowed them to write on any special occasion, and found that several wrote about their graduation from grade school or a vacation trip. This suggests that not family holidays, but personal special events were the high points of their memories.
Class paper VI	Given the choice of discussing differences between family feeling the BOOK OF RUTH and "Chienniang " and comparing the mother-daughter love of women, Ruth and Naomi, and Sister Joanna and Teresa, the students all chose the latter, probably because it is a relationship between two people with whom they feel most familiar, and because they have not yet become interested in seeing what holds together a family group.
Class paper VII	In this paper, that askes for a comparison of the love of Cyrano for Roxane with that of Don Jose for Carmen, it would be well to point out that comparison may mean either a revealing of similarities or of differences. I asked the students to do both. Their first response will be to see only the differences. However, it must be pointed out that in comparing two things, one must compare them on some similar subject, such as the nature of the characters, the manifestations of the love, and the effects. I also pointed out that in contrasting, one must think of what the pairs of lovers have in common with each other as well as the ways in which they differ.
Class paper VIII	This paper asks how the ring in THE GENERAL'S RING influenced one of the characters. The word "influence" has to be explained; for this word I substituted the words "have a direct or indirect effect on the actions of or life of."

Class paper IX

This paper asks that the student choose one character from THE ILIAD and show that he is "more than life-size," as I.A. Richards says. It is necessary to limit the choice of character to a human one, rather than one of the gods or goddesses. Richards' introduction is very interesting to the students and influenced most of them to write about Achilles, whom he uses as an example. They understand "more than life-size" to mean having abnormally intense emotions, but what really impressed them was the character's giving vent to, and openly expressing, by word and action, the emotion. Only one student used the word "great" in describing a character (Achilles, in this case), and I think the discussion preceding the writing of the paper should touch on the question of the differences between goodness and greatness, the definition of greatness, in fact; this discussion would bring out the definition of, and characteristics of, heroism. It should also bring out the reasons for not being able to apply the word "heroic" to the immortals. I think it would also be pertinent to bring up the subject of the differences between type characters and individualized ones; such discussion might enlarge the concept of "more than life-size" to include a character as an embodiment of an emotion or idea, as the very prototype of a certain kind of hero.

Class paper X

This paper asks for a comparison of Moses and Beowulf as heroes. I specified that this paper was to show similarities as well as differences; that is, the word "compare" was to be understood also as "contrast." Since the two heroes embodied the qualities valued by the peoples they led, discussion of the ancient Hebrew and Germanic peoples is both interesting and helpful.

Class paper XI	This paper was to show the contrast between the kinds of appeal used by Brutus and Antony. After they had written the papers, I showed the class how I would have written the theme, contrasting the two speeches on certain points, such as tone, purpose, truthfulness, and to what in the audience they were addressing. The class found this so helpful, that they said I should have done it before asking them to write their themes. In other words, actual examples are better than rules.
Class paper XII	The students had a choice of two topics: first a comparison of Andreevich's kind of heroism with that of another hero; second, an answer to the question, "Does Andreevich satisfy your concept of a hero? Why?" All chose the second topic, probably because they thought it would give them a chance to express their own opinion without objective reasons. Many of the students felt that Andreevich was not a satisfactory hero, because he was not always heroic, or "popular and well-liked." Also, they felt that since he behaved heroically only when he had no choice of behaving otherwise, he deserved no credit for his heroism.
Class paper XIII	This paper is to be an answer to the question, "Is the trait of miserliness so exaggerated in Harpagon that we lose belief in the reality of his character? Explain." All the students gave what I think is the answer that is obviously called for: "No." However, the reason they gave was that "there might really be people like that" or that they knew miserly people. What should have been brought out more clearly in the preceding class discussions was the question "Are we ever supposed to have belief in Harpagon in the first place?" and the question "What constitutes reality in a fictional character?" The students felt that their lack of experience in life prevented their being sure of how much the character of Harpagon was exaggerated. It must be emphasized to the class that not life experience but the ability to respond to literary experience was necessary.

Although I did not lower the grades of the students much because of errors in grammar, punctuation, or usage, I did keep a list of the most frequent errors found in the papers and went over them in class. It is a great help to the students to give them mimeographed anonymons copies of several class themes and allow them to correct them either together in class or for homework. They are, of course, better critics of one another's papers than of their own. I found that the grades on their papers upset them; therefore, I recorded the grades in my rollbook and did not put a grade on the papers. After the class discussion on the set of papers, I allowed them to rewrite their papers, giving them a chance to raise their grade. Few availed themselves of the opportunity. I found that for the points on which I graded the themes, they did just as well in class as at home.

I found that, although I carefully corrected their themes, in most cases they did not understand my corrections. Some felt it was mere carping to ask for correct spelling and punctuation. I feel that a personal conference with each student would be helpful; it should be held after the middle of the year, when the student has enough papers to go over. Since I taught only one class each morning, I was not at school at the end of the day, when the conferences could be held. Therefore, I made it a practice toward the end of the year to be available to help any student who needed help during the writing of a class paper. This was very helpful to those who had difficulty with the important topic sentence and indicated what details should be in the body of the paper. As I have said, I think all the tests and themes should serve the purpose of instruction and not befuddlement.

Since there is danger that the language study lessons will seem fragmentary and unconnected with the rest of the curriculum, I think that the class papers should be collected and kept by the teacher, for use by the students after each unit on language study. For example, after Modification is studied, the students can use the last theme they wrote to pick out examples of modification that they used and to insert others where possible or necessary. After the unit of Variation by the use of infinitive and gerund phrases, they could go over their themes and point out where they have used such methods of variation and insert infinitive and gerund phrases where possible.

V. SPECIAL MATTERS

Biblical Selections

Since the Bible is being taught as literature, I think the teacher would do well to know some of the characteristics of Hebrew poetry and other Biblical literature; the class will be interested in this, too. I myself especially like the following three books; for consultation and perhaps quotation, to the class:

Chase, Mary Ellen, THE BIBLE AND THE COMMON READER
Moulton, James Hope, THE BIBLE AS LITERATURE
Fosdick, Harry Emerson, A GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

Other books that might be of interest to the teacher are:

Chase, Mary Ellen, LIFE AND LANGUAGE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT
Chase, Mary Ellen, PSALMS FOR THE COMMON READER
Mounton, James Hope, THE LITERARY STUDY OF THE BIBLE: an account of the leading forms of literature represented in the sacred writings. (A copy of this can be found in the closed stacks at the University of Pittsburgh Library.)

As for Biblical theology, it can hardly be avoided, (since the culture is so closely related by mutual interaction with the religions based upon the Bible). The lesson plans do direct attention to the idea of God, as revealed in the Psalms, as a patriarchal God. Comparison with the African "Song of Praise to the Creator" shows that unlike the Biblical God, the African God is seen as both father and mother, both male and female. The class would find it of interest to know that the final form taken by religions based on the Bible was not the only form they ever had; that there was a matriarchal tradition that persists only in a sublimated or non-overt form. The selections from EXODUS would be the obvious occasion for briefly pointing out that the Hebrew holiday of Passover and the Christian holiday of Easter stem in part from the use of this literature in the service of theology. Furthermore, the handling of the supernatural, as shown in the miracles of the crossing of the Red Sea and the giving of the Ten Commandments, might require some comment by the teacher. Even if one disregards the "religious" effect, the literary effect would be lessened if the teacher attempted to explain away the miraculous. When one student said, "My mother says every word in the Bible is true," I sidetracked the issue, or rather, diverted it from the question of the divine source of the miracles to the miraculous effects. I led the class to the idea that the miraculous was shown not only in the manner by which the Hebrews escaped from slavery, but by the fact that they escaped at all. In like manner, the class came to see that the fact that we possess the Ten Commandments at all can be viewed as miraculous, not merely the agency by which they were written.

The conflict between good (as represented by God) and evil makes for suspense and interest as literary devices.

This brings up the entire subject of religion as we find it in the literature.

The religious ideas expressed by the students included an admiring reference to Billy Graham and one student's statement, in a theme, that "Moses went around preaching the gospel." One girl, when we discussed the story, "The Stranger's Note," could not respond sympathetically, because, she said, "I don't believe in divorce." Obviously they thought of religion in terms of proselytism, evagelism, or dogmatism, revealing a narrow sectarianism. During the class discussion of the selections from EXODUS, many laughed at the name of Moses' sister Miriam, because it was unfamiliar to them. They became thoughtful and interested, however, when I pointed out that "Miriam" is the original Hebrew of the more familiar "Mary" just as the name "Joshua" is the Hebrew word for "Jesus."

What should be explicitly pointed out is the manner in which the literature shows religion as private experience, as a relationship, or as a form of knowledge, not as mere moral or ethical platitudes. In fact, the class was so ready to "accept" and repeat glibly certain religious ideas that I felt it was no loss to them to omit, from their reading, stories that they were capable of seeing only as affirmations of what to them were already religious platitudes--"Christ in Flanders" and "What Men Live By"--even though the excellence of these stories lies in the fact that they illustrate the religious ideas in life-situations.

The Supernatural

The handling in class discussions of the supernatural, as it occurs in the literature, will depend in part on the form the supernatural takes: as religion, as superstition, as magic, or as the uncanny and inexplicable. Since, in this literature, the supernatural is used for valid literary effect, it will be the task of the teacher to encourage the belief in and search for manifestations of the supernatural in the natural world, rather than to search primarily for "natural" explanations of the supernatural. For some students, accustomed to psychological explanations of psychic phenomena, it was necessary, in discussing THE GENERAL'S RING, to bring out the fact that a guilty conscience could lead some of the characters to project the ghost; however, it should be made clear to the class that to "explain" things is not to explain them away. On the contrary, the purpose of "natural" explanations of the supernatural should be to strengthen the students' ability to respond to the literature that uses the supernatural as an element in the total effect.

The story, "As the Night, the Day," shows that, under man's rational belief in the "higher" religions, lies a primitive belief in, and faith in the magical and irrational.

The story, "Chienniang," should be so explained as to show the "supernaturalness" of love itself--that is, its creative purpose and outcome.

Materials for Testing and Grading

The mimeographed quizzes, tests, analysis sheets and homework sheets, along with the assigned class themes, are adequate in variety and in number for enabling the teacher to arrive at a fair grade for overall performance of each student in reading, writing, and speaking English. The quizzes and language tests give objective means of testing; and the class themes, because details from the stories and a certain form in organization are required, also make possible the use of objective criteria in grading.

The testing materials are doubly excellent, because they can be used as teaching materials. The quizzes are valuable, because they teach students the need to read carefully. Furthermore, after collecting them, I went over the answers in class and used them as a point of departure for some of the class discussion and some of the reading in class. The analysis sheets make it possible for the students to become self-critical about their own papers; they are, of course, more objective critics of others', rather than of their own writing. The class papers are described in the curriculum as Composition-Literature, indicating that they are a means of testing both reading and writing abilities. I think the teacher will want to use the subject of the papers as a nucleus around which to build some of the class discussions. I think it is permissible to establish the content of the papers as much as possible, so that students can devote more time to organization and correct usage.

The lesson plans, which form the basis of class discussions, also enable the teacher to assess students' work by class participation. I found that each day's lesson plan just about covered the amount of class time.

Going over the answers to quizzes in class made it inadvisable to give the quizzes to those who were absent on the day they were given. Also, those who were absent for the language study lessons had no opportunity to make them up or to understand the mimeographed homework sheets. It would be an advantage to have some of the language lessons in mimeographed form for students who must miss them.

Audio-Visual Aids

The list of audio-visual aids given to or suggested for the teacher is excellent. I would add only a map of the world and recordings of the opera CARMEN and of Egyptian music, ancient and modern.

Aside from the individual maps for the various literary selections, a map of the world is indispensable. For example, a world map showing the proximity of Germany to France (and especially to Normandy) helps students to understand the danger that a traditionally militaristic Germany presented to people like Old Milon. Also, pointing out the scene of the battle of Philippi would clarify some of the crucial military decisions in the play JULIUS CAESAR.

After the students had read the story CARMEN, I brought to class a recording of the opera CARMEN and played the most familiar parts. I pointed out how and why the story was changed in the adaptation to the operatic form, incidentally pointing out the differences in the requirements of works meant for private reading or public performance. The recording of CARMEN, like the photograph of the Taj Mahal, can be used to show how various art forms can present the same idea in different ways; they also show the influence of one artist upon another.

Audio-visual aids will be found most necessary during the reading of lengthy works, such as A TALE OF TWO CITIES. Only great interest and suspense could compensate for the reading problems presented by this novel. The aids, such as film strips, can be used to make clear what poorer students cannot get from written descriptions. Films and pictures based on the next day's assignment would help in sustaining interest, rather like a "Scheherezade" or "Perils of Pauline" approach.

Audio-visual aids, as I.A. Richards says of the stock epithets and descriptive fillings in the original ILIAD, "are essentially man-made *rests*...by which the strain of composition" of inductive class discussion "and of comprehension for the listeners, can be lessened...(T)hey have, as it were, a general, not a specific duty."

I suggest that audio-visual aids be used only after the students have completed at least part of the reading to which the aid pertains. Since ability to respond to the printed word is most important, I would allow the students to begin to identify with the characters in a story, before showing them a picture that presents the characters in costumes of a different time or place. For example, it was only after the class had begun the reading of Hussein's "The Stream of Days" that I played for them a recording of Egyptian music, popular and classical; these mid-Eastern songs and instruments evoke an atmosphere of strangeness to those unaccustomed to them, reiterating the strangeness evoked by the story.

Bibliographical

To the teacher who feels the need of a bibliography on the subject of general ideas in western culture, I can recommend the following:

Denis de Rougemont, LOVE IN THE WESTERN WORLD
Norman O. Brown, LIFE AGAINST DEATH
Norman O. Brown, LOVE'S BODY
Harvey Cox, THE SECULAR CITY

I have elsewhere in this report recommended:

ANTHOLOGY OF BEOWULF CRITICISM, edited by Lewis E. Nicholson
WORD ORIGINS AND THEIR ROMANTIC STORIES, Wilfred Funk

For the teacher who wishes to convey something of Egyptian origin to the class, while they are reading "The Stream of Days," I recommend:

LOVE POEMS OF ANCIENT EGYPT, translated by Ezra Pound and
Noel Stock

I have given a short bibliography on the Bible as literature in the section on Biblical Selections.

Grade 11
Year 1965-66

PROJECT ENGLISH ELEVENTH-GRADE CURRICULUM STUDY:
THE AVERAGE ACADEMIC STUDENT AND THE TEACHER WITHOUT SPECIAL PREPARATION

by

Philaine Katz
July, 1967

"It was hard at first, but then I really started to like it."
--An eleventh-grade student in the Project English class

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I. INTRODUCTION

This is an evaluative report of the Project English curriculum, devised at the Curriculum Study Center in English at Carnegie Institute of Technology, when presented to a class of 11th grade students of average intelligence in an experimental situation. The objectives of the experiment were twofold: first, to see if and how this curriculum, which was originally developed for accelerated students, would work with average students; second, to see the manner in which this curriculum would be presented by a teacher with no prior or in-service training for the project.

The outcomes of the two objectives were entirely successful. The method of presentation of this report therefore will be that of a dynamic process, attempting to simulate the teacher's experience with the curriculum in order to demonstrate the way in which conclusions about the project were drawn. The format will be by subjects, i.e., by Literature, Language and Composition, then by specific evaluations of the Units. This constitutes the body of the paper, which will be preceded by a general discussion of overall results and followed by a summary of general conclusions. Throughout this paper, there will be evaluations on curriculum sequence and on the specific objectives of the experiment.

II. GENERAL RESULTS: THE STUDENTS AND THE TEACHER

Both objectives in this experiment were successfully achieved. The teacher was able to handle the Project English curriculum extremely well with average students, both teacher and students benefiting immensely from an unusually good year. Expecting a good deal from the students made them work harder and give more to the teacher.

In the literature units, the students were initially excited in "getting all of those books" rather than just one anthology. There were more books, more readings, and more interest than in a traditional curriculum so that the stimulation level was always high. Several students even mentioned that they liked having books of different colors, and they all seemed to take good care of their valued books. This variety and stimulation were no small thing and were very important to the students.

The students were never bored. They liked the material they read. There were experiences with a wide range of genres, and they had a number of experiences with each genre: many short stories, plays, novels--and not a limited quota of perhaps one of each for a year's work, as is typical of the traditional curriculum. This directly accounted for increased student capacity for handling literary works that would be difficult even for accelerated students.

The theme approach was so well coordinated that it encouraged an unexpected level of idea-development in average students. They developed concepts in all areas of the curriculum, finding even "grammar" to be interesting, exciting, and full of ideas.

There was a definite improvement in student writing. The writing unit, which grew perhaps best of any of the units with its intricately worked out progressions and continuities, reaped definite results. Through their writing the students matured, became more sophisticated. They developed their ability to abstract as they moved from the concrete to the general and developed a conceptual apparatus. The influence of the writing flooded into other spheres. There was no problem by the middle of the year, for example, in talking about topics on a metaphorical basis. Yet this had been quite hard for them at the beginning of the year.

The inductive approach also proved effective with average students. Never told they were "wrong," they were encouraged to experiment with ideas. They began to feel that they had resources within themselves and soon learned a self-correcting process. They learned that what they said was worth while, but they also learned how to support an idea, and that what they said had to have support. Perhaps the greatest product of this approach was a new and valuable sense of self-worth.

The students received a good deal of new, interesting information. Through the combination of a stimulated high interest level and a greater cultural exposure, they gradually became more sophisticated. The exposure in new and exciting ways to topics like anthropology, history, and even theology had the further effect of unprovincializing the students and incorporating them into the larger world. They became more a part of a national culture and of a longer cultural tradition, with more of an educated person's commitment to the culture rather than the marginal member's disdain and disinterest in such things. I believe these students would be much less likely, for instance, to become school drop-outs because they have a greater commitment to the "system." Indeed, they became more college-oriented and academically-oriented by the end of the end of the year, with one student the recipient of The National Council of Teachers of English Academic Award.

Of course, most of the students had been in the tenth grade Project English class, so that they were "ready." Much of the harvest was the sequential growth of two years. They looked forward to further growth in this sequence in the twelfth grade Project English class, and were disappointed that this would not be. Indeed, some of them began organizing and petitioning.

For the teacher, the curriculum's directions were clear and extremely easy to put into practice. Fortunately, unlike so many teacher's guidebooks which accompany texts the Project English curriculum directions were not unimaginatively or oppressively detailed, which would leave little room for teacher iniative. The teacher could inject her own personality into the curriculum and at the same time offer a standardized curriculum that could give students in different parts of a city a commonalty of experience.

The time allocation was also excellent, allowing for efficient planning and control. The careful scheduling allowed for pre-vision and saved energy. The teacher was thus not only given a schedule but enabled to do a better job. Units could not possibly get out of hand because of the time allotment to be kept in mind. Reading quizzes were set up so that the teacher could allocate her time to more worthwhile things. She could spend the time, for example, on composition, reading, on enrichment, and on individual attention to students. And with almost all of the time-wasting "dogwork" taken out of her job, the teacher is permitted more enjoyment by the curriculum also. The teacher, too, could continue learning.

III. INTRODUCTION TO THE UNIT DISCUSSIONS

The year was successful as it was, and the experiment could be successfully repeated without any emendations. The following recommendations are suggested mainly as refinements to insure a curriculum of high polish and flawless quality.

At times some points may seem abstruse in reference to average students, but it is my opinion that clearing up these minor imperfections in the curriculum would be good for students of all intelligence levels and make the curriculum even easier for the teacher to administer. But I think that average students especially benefit from a curriculum of flawless order because they are less able to intuitively see covert connections and put things together in an order they have made. So at the same time the curriculum is being generally perfected, students and teachers alike will be obtaining additional benefits from it.

The recommendations may be regarded either as general suggestions for the curriculum, if a broad evaluation is desired; or as specific suggested adaptations of the Curriculum for average students, if a more delimited evaluation of the curriculum is desired.

IV. LITERATURE

Unit I: The American Puritan Attitude

Since this unit was the beginning of the course, comments pertain largely to introductory methods.

The students were highly responsive to this unit and its readings. They liked the mimeographed Puritan readings, Ethan Frome, and all the other selections. They agreed that the selections had good story content--important in an introductory unit.

An indication of the students' initial reading skill was that with The Scarlet Letter they were reading on a literal level, reading only for the plot and the story. It was laborious at this time trying to work out representations of ideas. However, this soon occurred more easily, and by the time the students were reading Ethan Frome, they were enjoying a much fuller sense of a literary work. This, I think, is directly accountable to the thematic approach and the construction of the curriculum, which afforded meaningful grouping and progression with details, concrete examples, and specific comparisons of character, for example, leading to abstractions that never had to be superimposed by the teacher.

The historical-thematic approach to literature began to develop a critical faculty in the students through the cumulative perspective which it offered. Still another advantage of the historical-thematic approach was the story-like manner which lent a suspense to the sequence of units.

At the beginning of the course there was some need to start out more slowly and pick up pace as we moved along. An introduction to the course might have led these students into the curriculum a bit more gently. However, by Ethan Frome, the unit was going quite smoothly, so that this recommendation is made mainly to insure a very smooth beginning.

The students needed to proceed a bit more slowly also in building up to abstractions. Ideas did not penetrate as easily at the first as they were later to do. Character comparisons were effective, but idea-comparisons, in addition, could help this development early in the year.

The ideas were diffuse enough (such as sin, guilt, God, etc.) to suggest the need for an Interpretation Sheet for unit ideas. The Perry Miller definition of Puritanism used in Language Unit III: DICTIONARIES AND DEFINITIONS, for example, would have helped very much in this respect. This need for an Interpretation Sheet for unit ideas will be discussed in regard to some other units, also.

In anticipation of the following units, there could be some attempt to correlate the units. Some questions to anticipate are:

How did we get from the Puritan attitude to the desire for success?

How is idealism connected to this?

To the darker spirit?

Where did the American social conscience come from?

Why are writers today still interested in the Puritans?

Unit II: The American Desire for Success

A social awareness seemed to come out of this unit along with social concepts, e.g., social stratification, old rich, new rich, and social change. The students gained a broader range of social information that increased their understanding of the qualities of novels and of realism as a literary style.

In this unit, it might be a good idea to mention to the teacher that she may often need to re-word the discussion questions. Otherwise, the teacher may think the questions are to be used verbatim, and that therefore they frequently are too advanced for the students. The teacher may often have to work with the students on words used in the questions, or even do some preliminary and/or cumulative vocabulary work, for there are often complex concepts implied. For example, in Day II: Class Discussion #7: "Though humorous, is the philosophy of this poem consistent with the other sections of the Autobiography?"

A point such as this one may include a category term that it is essential to work on before the student can answer the question. In this particular case, the concept of "consistency" is more complex than one would imagine initially.

An introductory sheet with "success" interpretations and definitions which the curriculum writers think portray the theme would be helpful here.

Unit III: The American Idealism

The students had an enormous response in this unit to Emily Dickinson, to Carl Sandburg, and to Robert Frost. They seemed to understand these writers amost instinctively. Yet they did not like Walden, Emerson's essays, or the poetry of Bryant or Holmes. The objective here therefore would be to stabilize and maintain interest in this unit so that the students can extract all the meaning and enjoyment that can be obtained from this important group of writers in American literature. There was so much value in teaching this unit to students that the following suggestions are intended to make it ultimately teachable to average students.

The reason I think the average students responded unevenly to the selections in this unit is that the words and concepts in this unit were more abstract than any previous experience for them had been, and therefore seemed diffuse, not concrete, and a bit remote. Their referents for words like "nature," "soul," and "idealism" were hazy, as they were also for idealistic views of man, nature, and God. They seemed to need close work with definitions here in order to proceed.

The resolution for this adaptation, happily, is built right into the curriculum. Language Unit III: DICTIONARIES AND DEFINITIONS, can be put to work for the idealism unit. In fact, the questions that came up have a direct, almost tailor-made application for the idealism unit. Although the words dealt within the dictionary unit are of a less abstract nature than in the idealism unit, there is a very real need to do this same kind of definition work with concepts and abstractions.

The applicability of the definitions is exact. As for being tailor-made, each type of definition studied could be tried. In Definition by Contrast, the teacher might ask: "Is idealism the opposite of pessimism? of materialism?" In Definition by Synonym, the teacher might ask: "Is idealism the pioneer spirit? An affirmation of life? An optimism? A belief in eternal life and eternal forms?" In an Operational Definition, examples could be drawn from personal experiences, e.g., "Idealism is when...," with students finishing the sentence with examples. Or one might ask if Emily Dickinson's line "Hope is a thing with feathers that perches in the soul" could be regarded as a statement of idealism. For average students, this would constitute a kind of enrichment work by fuller exposition.

Then the method of arriving at a definition could fashion a comprehensive definition of idealism. Its 'class' could be determined, e.g., in which a hope and affirmation of life are maintained against tremendous odds. Its 'antonym could be 'pessimism.' This would have the further function, also, of providing a unit synthesis.

UNIT III: THE DEFINITION OF LANGUAGE could be referred back to and applied in class discussion and/or in a new composition. A paper could be substituted or added for practice here. Paper VI was one of the best exercises and experiences of the year, so that I would not touch that; but paper VII: "In what ways does Alexandra's character exemplify American idealism?" could be retained by itself or with another composition added or substituted. If retained, as a specific illustration of the now-comprehended concept idealism, it would have greater meaning as an exercise for the students.

After the more generic characteristics of idealism are discussed, then some special preparation on the American variety of idealism should be developed. Idealism as expressed and/or modified by the American cultural pattern would follow. Universals and the American variety would then be distinguished. Thus such general points as optimism and affirmation of life, could be distinguished from yet included within the same large definition with the American pioneer spirit. This spirit and the transcendental idealism could also be seen as a blossoming within our history of certain traits which follow from and/or contrast with the previous periods, such as that of the Puritans and of Benjamin Franklin. These contrasts may even be self-evident.

The teacher's preparation for this could easily be handled in an introduction, which states the curriculum writers' interpretation of idealism and of American idealism. This introduction could include a definition or recommend a dictionary reference. Included within this unit is a definition from WEBSTER'S THIRD INTERNATIONAL DICTIONARY which I found helpfu. Appended to it are some comments about how it was useful to me.

I think this work would not only clarify the unit concepts but also would maintain student interest which was so high in much of the unit, and potentially high in others. The study of Walt Whitman's "Song of Myself" would especially benefit from preparation on the characteristics of idealism, especially in its philosophical and aesthetic meanings. (Some work with the expanding sense of self could also make this work more meaningful to adolescents. With some introduction into this idea, I believe, average students will more readily identify with these emotions and their artistic rendering. The coalescence of growth--personal and national--could also make this poem more meaningful.) The poems of Bryant and Holmes, as well as prose like Emerson's essays and Walden, would also have more meaning if discussed under the same, more precisely defined set of idealism (and American idealism) characteristics.

A Definition of Idealism from WEBSTER'S THIRD INTERNATIONAL DICTIONARY

1. a theory that affirms that mind or the spiritual and ideal is of central importance in reality: as a: a theory that regards reality as essentially spiritual or the embodiment of mind or reason esp. by asserting either that the ideal element in reality is dominant (as in Platonism) or that the intrinsic nature and essence of reality is consciousness or reason (as in Hegelianism)--called also metaphysical idealism b: a theory that identifies reality with perceptibility or denies the possibility of knowing anything except psychical reality and proceeds from the affirmation that the mental life alone is knowable to a dogmatic dualism (as in Cartesianism and Lockeanism) which in metaphysics results in realism, to a subjective idealism in metaphysics (as in Berkeleianism), or to solipsism or skepticism (as in Humanism)--called also epistemological idealism; see ABSOLUTE IDEALISM, MONISTIC IDEALISM, OBJECTIVE IDEALISM, PERSONAL IDEALISM, PLURALISTIC IDEALISM, SUBJECTIVE IDEALISM, TRANSCENDENTAL IDEALISM.

2. a: the practice of forming ideals or living under their influence: tendency to idealize b: something that is idealized: an ideal representation of experience.

3. literary or artistic theory or practice that values ideal or subjective types or aspects of beauty more than formal or sensible qualities or that affirms the preeminent value of imagination as compared with faithful copying of nature--opposed to realism.

The teacher may find this useful. The classes are "theory" (philosophical: metaphysical and epistemological), but more applicable to the unit are the class practice (the second definition). Also applicable for students is the "literary or artistic theory or practice" classes. Realism could be contrasted with this as a Contrast Definition, and the techniques of realism studied in The Rise of Silas Lapham could be contrasted with the techniques of one or several of the authors in the present unit.

Unit IV: The American Darker Spirit

The readings in this unit were among the most popular of the year, with the students nearly exulting in them.

There were questions about unit definition and the unit theme that could be cleared up in the same way or in additional ways to those of Unit III: The American Idealism.

It would help teachers in handling the curriculum to know what the curriculum writers intended or meant by a particular theme. Initially, this facilitates communication between teacher and curriculum writers, then later may facilitate the teacher-student dialogue and presentation as well as integrate the theme unit for average students. An introduction for the teacher would easily accomplish these ends.

For example, the phrase "darker, romantic view of life" was used in one lesson, which both illuminated points and raised questions. It implied, but did not explicitly state, that the curriculum writers viewed "romantic" as at least one meaning synonymous with the darker spirit. In an implied contrast definition, idealism, because not identical with the darker spirit, could not be romantic. This may seem abstruse for average students, but as I mentioned earlier in this paper, I think average students especially benefit from a curriculum of flawless order because they are less able to intuitively see covert connections and put things together in an order they have made. They need large categories, anticipated and built into their work, that are readily discoverable. The theme unit lends itself beautifully to this need, as the success of this experiment indicated. The intent is to capitalize upon this feature in all the workings of the curriculum.

As a further large,generic category, therefore, the term 'romantic' may therefore be introduced at some point, either with'idealism' in Unit II or in this present unit. Idealism and the darker spirit could be introduced as two spirits or two sides of romanticism, both involving a high use of imaginative and subjective elements, which could be contrasted to the realism of Unit II: THE AMERICAN DESIRE FOR SUCCESS. All of these could be regarded as aspects of "the American spirit."

"Romanticism" too, could be looked up in the dictionary, or elements of its definition handed out to the students. Again, WEBSTER'S THIRD INTERNATIONAL's definition could be suggested or included with the definition. I broke up the definition into points that could be assimilated readily.

The dictionary before analysis:

2. a(1): a literary, artistic, and philosophical movement orginating in Europe in the 18th century, characterized chiefly by a reaction against neo-classicism, with its stress on reason and intellect and an emphasis on the imagination and emotions and their freely individualized expression or realization in all spheres of activity, and marked esp. in English literature by sensibility and the use of autobiographical materials of an introspective cast, an exaltation of the primitive and the common man, an appreciation and often a worship of external nature, an interest in the remote in time and space, a predilection for the melancholy, and the use in poetry of older verse forms...

The dictionary after analysis:

a literary, artistic, and philosophical movement (class)

originating in Europe in the 18th century (time)

characterized by (modification)

1. an emphasis on the imagination and emotions
    a. and their individualized free expression
2. autobiographical material of an introspective cast
3. an exaltation of the primitive and the common man (*Walden*?)
4. an appreciation and often a worship of external nature (Whitman, Bryant,
5. an interest in the remote in time and space Dickinson)
6. a predilection for the melancholy

These, however, are only preferred suggestions to maximize conceptual development through readings that the students already held in high regard.

Teachers, it should be noted, should feel free to improvise upon unit introductory interpretations, e.g., if they have particularly strong preparation in some aspect or writer in American literature. Most teachers, however, would be grateful for clear, explicitly stated, authoritative and reliable definitions and interpretations of the material with which they are working--for their own knowledge and for more comprehensively teaching and pre-viewing questions students might have by fully understanding the material themselves.

Unit V: The American Social Conscience

This unit was a model of clarity and of a successful unit. The students responded greatly to thoughtful criticism of aspects of American society--because they had a referent. This unit was exceptional also in terms of the thematic relevance of each work of art. It was brilliantly clear to average students how the readings fit in; the students could see it themselves.

The students were so responsive to the material, in fact, that enrichment was in order, and they were highly receptive to any enrichment the teacher could offer. One enrichment offering which I made that other teachers might like to try, was the addition of several of the Sacco-Vanzetti letters to the "Winterset" section.

The only suggestion for this unit is that the definition of the term "American dream" would be helpful, if this term is to be used, specifying whether it refers to a success and/or idealism ethos. Some reference, a sentence perhaps, could be made to this term in whatever unit the curriculum writers feel it most meaningful.

Unit VI: The American Quest for Identity

All the readings in this unit were regarded of exceptionally high interest by the students, with The Red Badge of Courage and "The Hairy Ape" heading an already exceptionally popular list.

An answer to the question of whether the "quest" in this unit is an American (i.e., national) search, or individual's search, would be helpful.

V. LANGUAGE

Unit I: Language and Culture

The listing of objectives in the language section was very helpful in formulating focus and direction and made a large contribution to the considerable success of the entire language division.

The students found the anthropological point of view introduced in some of the lessons, and implicity running throughout the language units, to be very exciting. From the teacher's point of view this was exciting also, because the students seemed liberated from the notorious disdain students frequently have at the initiation of a "grammar" unit--which they tend to equate with all language as well as with drabness. They now had an enthusiastic interest in language, were freshly stimulated, and had an excitingly new kind of curiosity aroused. This made them very receptive to work in tne language and any enrichment the teacher wished to include. I added definitions within the U.S. to the world perspective offered in this unit, e.g., regional vocabulary differences within the U.S. that indicated different "philosophies." And within British and American English, I used some examples from "My Fair Lady."

Unit II: Definition of Language

This unit had a number of good features. The references were excellent here. The correlation to other units was good, e.g., literary symbols correlated with linguistics symbols here. The comparison of definitions was very successful; in fact, doing additiona, expanded work of this nature has been recommended in the literature units. And the work with definitions and the language unit mimeographs were extensively helpful towards imparting additional reading skills to the students: reading for information in non-literary units.

In this unit the students especially liked the work with nonsense verse, and the animal communication material.

The structural grammar review needed more time, though. I added two days because there was confusion between classes; phrases; and types of classes, and noun clause confusion, e.g., noun clauses as adjectives.

The order of the unit might be altered to more fully exploit its material, while retaining the exact material. Since the LANGUAGE AND CULTURE unit directly precedes the DEFINITION OF LANGUAGE unit, the transition between them could be very smooth. The grammar review, which fits so well within the material of Unit II, therefore could be shifted from the beginning of Unit II to the end of it.

The suggested alternative reorganizations are:

1. To start out with Day IV, "Vocabulary, Intonational Pattern, and Words, as Symbols," with its anthropological slant following from Unit 1. The order would be

Day V--The analysis of a definition of 'language'
Day VI- Clarification of the meaning of 'language'
Review of structural grammar.

The rationale for this order is that in addition to the continuity it provides with Language Unit I: LANGUAGE AND CULTURE, a definition of language will give more meaning to a structural grammar review. Once the elements of language are understood, proceeding from the general to the particular (English), structural grammar is easier to comprehend than when there are multiple elements to keep suspended in memory. The students, in returning to structural grammar will see it now in a new way, e.g., by way of Bruner's theory that anything can be taught at any level; but as the student returns to the same item each time, it is done on different, increasingly complex levels. Thus, in addition to not interrupting the unity of the language unit, this alteration would also enhance the meaning of structural grammar and its review.

2. If the teacher prefers, another alternative reorganization would be to keep the grammar review all together, therefore starting Unit II with Day V rather than "Vocabulary, Intonal Pattern, and Words as Symbols":

Day V --The analysis of a definition of language
Day VI--To clarify the meaning of 'language'
Structural grammar review.

3. A third alternative, which is a modification of the second alterative would be

Day V --The analysis of a definition of language
"Words as Symbols" from Day IV as a subpoint
under the arbitrary nature of words in this unit,
or given its own day
Day VI--To clarify the meaning of 'language'
Intonational Pattern (from Day IV)
Structural grammar review (expanded)

The "Vocabulary" section of Day IV: "Vocabulary, Intonational Pattern, and Words as Symbols" could be included with "Words as Symbols" and/or used to introduce Unit III: DICTIONARIES AND DEFINITIONS.

The structural grammar review correlated quite nicely with the composition work and its objectives. In the "Intonational Pattern" section, for example, introduced into the contrast between spoken and written language the concept of ambiguity as a function of writing the spoken language. This idea acted as a rationale in addition to its high interest, for the structural grammar study, since this awareness heightened the desire to improve written communication. In fact, it needs to have its ambiguities cleared up.

The work on intonational patterns lent itself beautifully to this end: the students saw how it helped with written communication, and their writing improved in clarity. Sensitivity to the basic as well as more subtle points of punctuation, for example, became self-evident to the students--no longer a set of rules to be memorized, forgotten, or misapplied, but rather a natural way of clarifying the ambiguities of written communication.

Unit III: Dictionaries and Definitions

An introduction is needed to this unit for purposes of continuity, integrated thematic content, and motivation. For continuity with the previous language unit, Unit II: DEFINITION OF LANGUAGE, the teacher could review Unit II, Day IV's small section on vocabulary at the beginning of the unit or save it entirely for an introduction to Unit III since it unifies the anthropological approach, the structural grammar review and the correlations with written presentation, and the place of the dictionary in the culture.

The introduction should lead into the material and also provide motivation. For average students, reasons must be given and motivation offered or this unit will seem duller than it would to brighter students. For interest and thematic unity, if WEBSTER SECOND versus WEBSTER'S THIRD were presented as a controversy, the unit could be more exciting for these students. For example, there could be a paper comparing the merits of each stand, taking a view. The teacher could get the students to formulate positions on controversial points, e.g., on status usage, slang, non-standard English, etc. Working on information plus opinions about it would impart more excitement and enthusiasm to the unit; it would also prepare for UNIT V: LEVELS OF USAGE.

If the teacher could formulate the positions on the dictionaries for the students early in the unit, there would be more meaning for them in acquiring the information in their research. She could state, for example, that there are basic differences between the two dictionaries and invite the class to see what they are--to see if they can discover the basic differences as they do their research. Then each report would be an installment in an unravelling mystery.

As has been mentioned earlier in this paper, there is a need to provide large categories for the students. I think average students need organizing devices for conceptualizing, imprinting, and retaining information. Large, motivating headings are needed. This unit, therefore, could be called THE DICTIONARY CONTROVERSY. There could be subheadings, also. The word "mechanism," for instance, was good as a category, suggesting that the phrase "the Machinery of the Dictionary" could be used in discussing the dictionary labels to unite all the mechanical dictionary labels under a single concept.

Another idea that would provide a thematic thread in this unit is "The Dictionary as a Key to the Language." The concept that could accompany this theme could be that language is changing, stratified, and organized, and that dictionaries interpret all this.

I also infused interest into the unit sections with analogous examples that led into a lesson; for instance, for subject labels and guide phrases, I mentioned the different ways the word "nebulous" was used in chemistry and literature. The subject labels and guide phrases were just a step then, beyond this.

Unit IV: What is Meaning?

This unit was very smooth and well-organized. It was also a model of the kind of category work and the building of cognitive structures that average students need. The metaphor as a large category, for example, included smaller categories (like personification) and a manner of exposition laid out in the curriculum that made this topic easy to conceptualize and of real interest ot the students.

The WHAT IS MEANING Unit, as well as the DICTIONARIES AND DEFINITIONS Units, could correlate with the abstract definitions of words in the WHAT IS MEANING Unit in the curriculum--Literature Unit III: THE AMERICAN IDEALISM--employing some of the tools acquired in the language units.

Unit V: Levels of Usage

This especially effective unit had many good features and produced definite results. The excellent reference list in this section was of considerable help to the teacher. The wide range of experiences with magazines and other media helped the students expand their experience and consciousness, and sophisticated them by giving them new perspectives and critical tools. In addition, the writing assignments in this unit produced vivid results in the students' stylistic flexibility and effectiveness in selecting appropriate usage levels during the rest of the year.

Unit VI: Dialects

This short but highly informative unit was among the most popular during the year.

VI. COMPOSITION

The organization and sequencing that is essential for building techniques and practicing skills and that is necessary for successful composition work was magnificently handled throughout the curriculum, so that composition skills from the beginning of the year compared to the end of the year were very recognizable and highly advanced.

The concreteness of the composition assignments and their intimate relationship to the literature and language units helped make this work of such high quality. The curriculum helped in teaching writing by its careful, sequencing, planning, and relating of topics to the unit work. Thus, the students were never at a loss for something to say, and motivation on the composition assignments was always good.

There were many helpful aids to composition built into the Project English curriculum. One was the conceptualizing along with supporting details, which helped teach the paragraph and composition structure in general. Another was the visualization of organization techniques, which helped transmit complex and often fine points of composition easily and clearly.

The inclusion of model papers was an unusually good idea, also. These model papers provide the teacher with standards of work at the outset, thereby eliminating the perennial teacher problem of the shifting standard that only formulates and evokes as the teacher makes headway through a large pile of papers. In this curriculum, standardization of the grading and of qualitative composition standards were maximized. The students also benefited from seeing the well-written papers and appreciated knowing so specifically what was expected of them.

One recommendation for the Composition based on the needs of this particular class of students, would be to add more single-paragraph writing practices at the beginning of the course before proceeding to double- and multi-paragraph composition. The teacher could stop for a day when possible to assign short papers on particular aspects of the reading, e.g., "Explain the significance of the name Pearl," or "Explain the symbolic movement of the sun in the first scene in The Scarlet Letter."

Throughout the body of this report, specific comments have been made relating to composition in the Literature and Language discussions. For specific references, see

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Grade 12
Year 1965-1966

PROJECT ENGLISH TWELFTH-GRADE CURRICULUM STUDY:

THE AVERAGE ACADEMIC STUDENT AND

THE TEACHER WITHOUT SPECIAL PREPARATION

by

Richard S. Wells
August, 1966

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I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Aims of the Project

This report is the final step in fulfilling my role as one of the six half-time teachers in Carnegie Institute of Technology's program to extend the Project English curriculum to able, college-bound students not in the upper 20% of their class. As explained by Dr. Robert C. Slack, Director of the Carnegie Curriculum Study Center, which designed an enriched curriculum for senior-high-school students, this program had as of that date been taught to select students in Pittsburgh area schools for the preceding two years. The hypothesis behind the particular phase of the problem with which I have been associated is that, with modification, the Project English program could be offered successfully to average college-bound students whose ranks in their respectiv classes tended to fall on the continuum below the upper 20% but above the median for their projected graduating class. What is more, the problem also concerns itself with the advisability of employing teachers not previously familiar with the Project English curriculum. In other words, this report wi attempt to answer two questions: Can the Project English courses be taught to all students of college calibre? Can the teacher not trained in these materials utilize them effectively?

The Teacher

According to the criteria established in Dr. Slack's report, I qualify as on of the six half-time teachers. First, I had no prior Project English teaching experience, although I had taught for eleven years. I taught English at Westinghouse High School for eight years. Following that period I taught senior high school English and Advanced Composition for three years at Taylor Allderdice High School. Both of these schools are located in Pittsburgh, Pennsy vania. Whereas Project English was taught in all three senior high school grades at Allderdice, my acquaintance with the courses of study and materials was practically non-existent. I knew the courses existed, and that was it. Second, I was, at the time Dr. Slack contacted me (April, 1965), a part-time student in the recently-enacted M. A. program at Carnegie Tech.

Some persons may assume that the "average" teacher of English may present the Project English program effectively; with this I should like to take issue. I do not consider myself an average teacher. This attitude may or ma not color the following report, but I do believe that certain qualifications, traits if you will, are essential in the teacher of Project English if the modifications assumed and the results desired are to be effectively attained. For example, I have for several years now allowed the inductive method to hold away in my classes. Tech's Project English curriculum demands this type of learning experience. It would be, therefore, rather difficult for a teacher experienced in the lecture or the drill technique to adapt. This is, of course, a personal observation; but I make mention of this solely to raise the tangential question--which may be answered through inference in the following pages--ought every teacher teach Project English?

The Environment

The physical environment attending my beginning the program was unique to me for several reasons. First, the school, Perry High School, is more a cross-section of urban Pittsburgh than were my pervious two assignments. Perry has a heavily White Angio-Saxon Protestant student body. Both Westinghouse and Allderdice are de facto segregated schools, one predominantely Negro, the other predominately Jewish. The environment of Perry was new to me. Second, the particular class comprising the Project English group was not what it should have been.

Perhaps further background data is here needed. Mrs. Patricia Sellars had taught eleventh-grade Project English at Perry the year before I arrived. The expectation of the Project English people, including Dr. Slack, was that I would "inherit" the same students Mrs. Sellars had taught, thus giving a sequential factor to my evaluation and making the basis for judgment of the effect of Project English in academic students twice as broad. It is significant, I believe, to note at this point that Mrs. Sellars and I had been in several classes in the Tech M. A. program during the year 1964-1965 and that consequently I was aware of problems she was having with the eleventh-grade group at Perry. Further, the lines of communication between us were always open, and I found her extremely cooperative in supplying me data while I was following up her work during my stint at Perry (1965-1966). Because of this open communication I was able to find, for example, that only one-third of the pupils she had had in the eleventh grade were scheduled for my twelfth-grade class. We had lost two-thirds of the students familiar with the Project English methodology and philosophy. As a direct result of this, the possibility of evaluating the sequential factor was practically non-existent. Also, because I was given a class two-thirds of which lacked the necessary sophistication to see the purpose of Project English, the mortality rate during the first week of school was quite high. Originally, thirty-six students were assigned to my class. On the second and third days of school in September I distributed the texts. This simple mechanical process triggered a near-stampede to the office for schedule changes. Granted that the distribution of some sixteen or so items can be forbidding if not terrifying to the uninitiated senior, the exodus served to signal to me that something was awry. In retrospect I can be fairly objective about the student losses--the size of the class dropped to twenty-seven--during that first week. Pupils at Perry had little previous writing experience because they hadn't been exposed to either the lay reader plan or the saturation (theme-a-week) plan. The children, therefore, upon discovering the course requirements fled in near panic in order to avoid jeopardizing their graduations. I can't really blame them. If there is a blame to be placed for the loss of a sequential evaluation, it must, I imagine, be placed on those who failed to sell Project English to the eleventh-grade participants and those who neglected to stand behind the Tech position that the class be retained as such. Perry scheduling preempted the Project English experiment; it is that simple.

However, the class was settled down to a stable twenty-seven, and I was left to my own resources.

The only other factor relative to the environment of the class is a statistical consideration. The average I. Q. of the group was 108. There were only two students in the range above 120; but there were only two below 95, so that the group could actually be considered as high average and, in the main, college material. Here, however, is where the Project English experiment was thwarted by scheduling at Perry High School. Only one half of the class had college aspirations. I surveyed the twenty-seven regarding their future occupations and education. Fifteen listed college, five chose the service, six (including the two best female students) indicated future limited business training, and one boy blatantly selected truck driving as his life's work. Such was my class in September of 1965.

II. PROCEDURES AND PROBLEMS

I had learned from Mrs. Weinhold, who had taught twelfth-grade Project English in this program in 1964-65, that she had been forced, by the nature of her class, to delete certain works, e.g., SIR GAWAIN AND THE GREEN KNIGHT. I made up my mind at the onset that I would follow through with the program as laid out by the planners, with certain modifications and additions. This I did. Consequently, the first unit, The Tale, was a mite difficult for me to effect. Beginning with the selections from THE DECAMERON and from the CANTERBURY TALES did, nevertheless, make the message of the significance, historical and literal, of the tale plain to the class. There was, to be certain, a little confusion attending the SIR GAWAIN AND THE GREEN KNIGHT study, but the aforementioned significances helped unmuddy SIR GAWAIN. We studied it only as a tale.

I must add at this point that I do not intend tó outline nor comment on the relative merits of each of the units covered. I will, by implication, convey those teaching units which I found most successful.

Let me first tell you of the primary problem I encountered with the class as students. Although, as I've mentioned, half of the students were new to the Project English methodology and philosophy, I assumed they had the same capacities for learning as had Mrs. Sellars' students. After all, they probably had similar academic backgrounds and abilities. This assumption was no doubt true, but I wonder if Mrs. Sellars had, as her first job with these children, the same task I had, i.e., to sell them on reading, on language, on appreciation of the arts in general. Frankly, I was appalled at their lack of sophistication and of their gross passivity. Only two members of the entire class would venture dissenting opinions. On several occasions I deliberately tried to provoke an argument--merely to liven them up a trifle. I'd say something like, "Well, it's plain to see that CANTERBURY TALES is anti-Rome" or "Milton is a blasphemer" or "Pip's treatment of Joe Gargery was justified." The same two students would raise their hands--unless told beforehand not to do so--while the rest sat. On several occasions I would ask a relatively routine question of one of the non-participants. I would say, for example, "Now Chuck, what is the central theme in 'On His Blindness'?" This question would follow a reading and discussion of the work. Chuck would sit and sit and do nothing. After several minutes he would begin to transmute himself into some inorganic structure. Yet, if I were to have asked the same question on a test, he could have answered it. The reaction, or lack of same, was not because of any lack of rapport on my part, nor of a fear of criticism--for I learned early to tone down my remarks. Never had I experienced such lethargy. I can only conclude from dozens of incidents such as that just simulated that these pupils had not been forced to ideate to an extent that they felt confident, that their previous experiences in the English classes had probably been "Read pages 27 to 35, and answer the questions on page 36" or "Pick out the verbs in this paragraph and list them on a piece of paper." They were all "nice kids" as the saying goes, but they had been grievously sinned against somewhare along the line. As a result, they had built up a keenly defined resistance against reading, discussion and opinionating in the English classroom. The extreme of this ignorance was manifested several times by one pupil (the potential truck driver) who would ask, "Why do we have to read this?" or "What good is this going to do us?" or some such. That boy should have had the question answered years before. I mention this particular case not only to show the lack of sophistication of the class with the written word and the whole concept of the study of the humanities but also to defend myself.

Further evidence of this lack of sophistication transpired during the unit on tragedy. I had seen the A. T. C. production of KING LEAR and was profoundly impressed with Rene Auberjoinois' interpretation of the title role. I immediately dittoed copies of the background of the play and the plot and distributed it to my class. Then I waxed long about the production, the lead, etc. My efforts paid off, and these efforts plus previous apparently successful readings and discussions of HAMLET and MACBETH whetted their desire to see Shakespeare on stage. In a few days I secured tickets for a dozen of them and went with them to the Playhouse. The girl seated next to me--the only one formally accepted into college by graduation time, ironically--nudged her girl friend throughout most of the play and tittered most obviously during the mad scenes. At the time I held my tongue; but the next day, after I had cooled down, I made several inquiries and found that ten of the twelve had never seen live theater and that the two who had, had seen Civic Light Opera productions only. Those children knew nothing about stage conventions, role-taking; yet we had already "studied" OEDIPUS, ANTIGONE, HAMLET and MACBETH. On the day after the play, the day I uncovered their cultural gap, one boy, a German immigrant, asked, "Why don't we do that more often" Nobody ever told us about 'seeing' a play." From that incident until the end of the school year I treated the class differently. I became more than an experimenter-teacher; I assumed myself into the parts of friend and cultural envoy as well. The horrifying aspect of this revelation was that these children, in the main, come from staid, middle-class American homes. The father of the giggling girl next to me at the Playhouse is a successful printer, owner of a downtown plant, and a past president of the Perry P.T.A.

Because of my previous teaching experiences, I was able to modify the daily lesson plans to what I consider good advantage. Af first, I did attempt to follow the questions in the units just as they are printed; however, my personality and the complexion of the class prevailed, and I frequently resorted to tangential, though related, lines of discussion. For example, in the initial contact with poetic terms and devices (Unit III, Lyric Poetry I) I had to backtrack considerably. It was actually necessary for me to start from the beginning with definitions and simple examples of figures of speech, the purpose of poetry, and related rudiments. Perhaps this was a reaction to the near-trauma produced by my naive assumptions regarding their backgrounds in drama and the subsequent shattering of same at the Playhouse. In any event, I found it quite expedient to utilize the Encyclopaedia Britannica film series on the humanities concerning Shakespearean theater and the novel. Then, too, I started from scratch with theme writing, actually reviewing at length such fundamentals as topic sentences, transitions, and logical conclusions. I don't know if this necessity for starting at the beginning is peculiar to my particular situation or not, but I do feel that had I not had a dozen years of experience I might not have been able to detect these inadequacies and correct them. What I'm saying, I imagine, is that giving any teacher the Project English outline and materials carte blanche might constitute a risk; and the curriculum is too full of potential intrinsic good to be given up to any element of risk.

Another problem concerning the daily lesson plans was one of timing. Many times I felt hurried, compelled inordinately to finish dealing with the topics assigned to a particular day. This was especially true of those units which were well-received or those which motivated lengthy discussions. PARADISE LOST particularly comes to mind in this regard. Several of the pupils were willing--and apparently able--to delve more deeply into theological considerations (with a certain amount of teacher-prodding, to be certain). However, once I had initiated a free-flowing and provocative round-robin, I'd glance at the master schedule, find I was on Day 74 and had better get this or that covered because Day 75 looked equally full, and curtail the enthusiasm. Sometimes, I'd let loose the reins; but the schedule did take on ominous aspects after a while. The fault might have been mine, for I admit I was unduly concerned at times with covering all of the material.

Here I must add a comment which is not intended as criticism but as what I consider a valid caution. Were I not the kind of teacher-person I am, I possibly could have been insecure in what I was doing daily because I was not once observed by anyone from the Project English group nor by the administration at Perry. I concluded by this that I was deemed competent by both factions, and for such confidence I am grateful. It might be, however, that not every teacher in my situation should be trusted. Experience could be one criterion to determine this trust. but there should be others. The only observer I saw all year was Allen Fort of L. W. Singer Company; and whereas I didn't succeed too well in selling him the program, he did comment on how enjoyable the class was to him when we hashed it over while having coffee afterwards. He also stated that it took them a while to get warmed up--we were discussing an "unknown friend" sonnet of Shakespeare's--but once enthused they responded well and correctly. This was a near-daily problem of mine, I explained. It continued to be my biggest problem all year. Those pupils just didn't like being forced to think, to compose themselves orally, to conceptualize.

I can go no further in this report on procedures and problems without pointing out my own most glaring weakness, the treatment (or mistreatment) of the language units. These lessons were the only ones which caused me to be uneas Twice during the fall semester I had to present units dealing with some aspect of linguistics. The first encounter introduced me to Nelson Francis' THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH. About this subject I knew virtually nothing, about Francis nothing. I slogged through. The trouble was, of course, that I had never had a course in linguistics and was personally steeped in traditional grammar. Fortunately, Francis approached Middle English from an etymological viewpoint; so the unit wasn't completely a waste. However, I didn't (and still don't) understand the purpose of introducing any phase of linguistics at this point except perhaps that it followed THE CANTERBURY TALES. The derivations of Modern English as found in Middle English would have been more graphically illustrated had we read any of Chaucer in the original. Then I would have seen the correlation. As the unit stands, I feel it is a bit forced. When BEOWULF came along, and with it the second language unit, I was even more bewildered but no more so than when I tried to determine how to use the Old English recording. I simply failed to grasp the rationale behind the record (there was no accompanying text), and so I resorted to the same tack I had used with Middle English, i.e., the etymological relationships. The unit on Modern English immediately preceded my enrolling for the linguistics course at Tech, but I had little difficulty with it. As it developed, the Tech course would not have helped had I taken it earlier because it dealt with generative grammar and this field does not enter into any of the twelfth-grade units on language.

Sometime around Thanksgiving I tired of a too strict adherence to the unit lesson plans. The day-by-day practice of assign and discuss, assign and discuss began to wear on the students and on me. I, therefore, attempted to vary the techniques used in the classroom. For example, I selected different scenes from MACBETH and asked several of the better students to read parts on the day following the selection. The purpose here was, to be certain, to provide a change of pace; but I also felt that the pupils were not giving enough of themselves in the classroom. The readings worked well, and they didn't particularly object to their assignments. One girl, in fact, had a passion to read Lady Macbeth as often as I'd let her. I felt free to interrupt the readings to allow interpretations of certain images on foreshadowings or character studies. Pupil response to this device was quite affirmative, so much so that we did the same thing with HAMLET, a work not included in the course of study but one which I felt free to introduce because the tragedy unit was being so well received. The concepts of the tragic hero and the tragic flaw intrigued the class, and I seized the opportunity to bring in another related source, Aristotle. We measured Shakespeare's tragic heroes against those of Sophocles using the Aristotelian concept of tragedy. Later, I expanded this by bringing in Arthur Miller's definition of the modern tragic hero, actually his defense of Willie Loman; and all the members of the class absorbed themselves in the unit. At this point I introduced KING LEAR with the aforementioned results.

WUTHERING HEIGHTS constitutes the last work in the tragedy unit, and knowing I could not carry over the type of participation-reading-of-parts into a novel and not wanting just then to return to the suggested format of daily, teacher-provoked discussion, I decided to vary the daily routine again. I had recently heard from a classmate of mine in graduate school that he successfully had employed the device of having a student present a short paper on an assigned topic for class discussion. I decided that since the class was receiving the tragedy unit so positively, I might take advantage of their sudden interest and attempt the same thing. I, therefore, assigned topics on WUTHERING HEIGHTS and other works already covered and asked for a short paper which would be duplicated and presented for class discussion. The results were gratifying, and although the papers were not particularly effective on the whole, they did give several of the students the opportunity to head the class and direct the discussion. I took the seat of the student presenting his paper and took no larger a role in the discussion than he would have had we not changed places. Later, I used the same technique for several other works. Some of the students' papers which were presented can be found in the Appendix at the end of this report.

The second unit on lyric poetry (Unit VI) also provided me with the opportunity to let the students direct the class. I varied the preceding assignment somewhat in that I asked particular students to prepare lists of questions on assigned poems. This assignment and technique could not have been used during the first unit on lyric poetry (Unit III) because, as I mentioned before, during Unit III I had to affect a tremendous amount of review work on poetic devices, style, etc.

Generally speaking, the results of the student-led discussions on lyric poetry were not only satisfying but somewhat revealing as well. Every student handling this assignment devised questions which served to promote healthy, often enthusiastic, responses. In fact, the pupils at times felt free to question their peers' judgments and observations although had I said the same things they would have nodded assent.

Another revealing feature of this unit on lyric poetry was the frequency with which the student-composed questions paralleled those on the Project English lesson plans. Practically every student had at least one question (or variation thereof) which I would have asked had I been using the Project English daily lesson plan.

Following my automobile accident, hospitalization with a broken ankle, and rest at home--all of which consumed about three precious weeks at the beginning of May--I returned and found the class had been well led by Miss Vicki Adler and that she had been able to continue with them in much the same manner as had I. I am particularly grateful for her help.

We concluded the school year with THE COCKTAIL PARTY, thus missing only MAN AND SUPERMAN of the assigned readings.

The last assignment the class had was a written final examination. Knowing that the Project English program does not call for a final examination but awar that the Perry testing program allowed me to give one, I was somewhat undecided on whether or not to test the class. I began to consider how possibly I could test on the material covered and decided that it was much too cumbersome. Besides, an objective test runs counter to my own beliefs. What kind of an essay question could I ask? Quite by accident I happened across the NCT Annual Achievement Awards question given to eleventh-grade students. Immediately, the question triggered in my mind the many times the boy who wanted to be a truck driver had asked about the value of "reading this stuff." Had he, I wondered, merely been saying what some others were thinking but wouldn't say? The essay test would, I thought answer the question. I also recalled that Mrs. Weinhold, I believe it was, had asked her experimental group to evaluate the program at the end of the year.

Two days before the end of school, I gave the class the question I had accidentally found. It allowed them full expression, I thought. They were to answer it at home as a theme assignment. The question and excerpts from the students' papers are to be found in the Appendix.

III. CONCLUSION

No one failed, and no one received an "A." This is one conclusion to be reached concerning my experience at Perry High School. Certainly, it is a shallow conclusion, one which a student would understand. However, the real conclusion to be drawn about the possibility of using Project English materials for the average college-bound student must be made by me; and it must be made as objectively as possible.

A qualified "Yes" is my conclusion. I honestly feel that the twenty-seven pupils assigned to Project English, despite the arbitrary selection process used in assigning them to the course, profited by the experience. In view of the fact that only one child I knew of out of twenty seven had been accepted by a college, each individual was enriched by the course. My reasons for qualifying my conclusion are no doubt evident to one who has read this report. However, I shall elaborate. First, the student must be honestly placed in the academic curriculum. If he has no post-graduate aspirations he might balk at the amount of work assigned or he might feel that the course is an intrusion on his time. Several of the pupils I had worked after school or in the evenings. They could not keep up with the assignments. The school and especially the counselor--must select these students early and allow them the advantage of three years of sequential Project English. To impose twelfth-grade Project English on the uninitiated does him, the class, and the teacher disservices. In a college-oriented high school, this placement is no problem. Unfortunately for me, Perry High School is not college-oriented. The pupils could not see the advantage of the enriched course.

Second, the teacher must be experienced. I should like to suggest that no one with fewer than five years' teaching experience be considered. If this sounds harsh, I apologize. My reason is entirely personal. I could not have been able to provide the necessary stimulation nor to explain "why we gotta read all these books" sufficiently at the end of my second or third year of teaching. I'm not sure I knew the answers then; and, as I implied initially, I consider myself a better-than-average teacher. I believe it takes a mature individual, one who has been confronted with several years of frustrations in the conveying of the purpose of teaching English to the young skeptic and one who has come to terms with himself by answering The Question over and over, to be able to appreciate fully the advantages of such an enriched program as Project English.

I'm glad, no--I'm elated that I had the opportunity I had this past year. I only wish I were teaching the subject again this year.

IV. APPENDIX

Student Reports

Shakespeare's heroes and heroines, as well as the groups of people he wrote about were sometimes in opposition to each other. Their ideas and feelings would clash and struggles would occur. The outward conflict in the lives of these persons, as well as, the conflict of forces in the lives of the heroes led to many disagreements, strife and friction, and these conflicts of forces dominated their lives. For example, Macbeth wants to be a good man, but at the same time within his thoughts he wants to murder Duncan to gain the crown. His love for Lady Macbeth and the desire to grant her wishes to become queen, prompts him to commit the murder. Thus, the forces of good and evil are in conflict within him. On the other hand, Hamlet suffered from an inward conflict that changed his disposition. He resented his mother's recent marriage to his uncle after his father's death. He becomes bitter and critical and revenge is his goal in life.

Aside from Shakespeare's heroes, we must not forget those written by other authors. For example, Heathcliff at times was wicked in the way he helped to destroy Hindley. On the other hand, he comforts Cathy and does not display any cruelty towards her. He wants to do good, but the forces of evil are with him, thus he is struggling with an inner conflict. As an orphan in Liverpool, England, he learned many cruel lessons about life and he lacked the love and affection that was needed in his boyhood. The forces of good and evil were his constant companions, but it was the evil force that was victorious. Lastly, Oedipus was a man who was searching for the truth about his real identity. He is a good man, although he is a victim of fate and constant struggling within himself. He is horrified by his own wrong and turns against himself. An inner conflict has caused great strife in his life. Thus, all these heroes were affected in some way, either by fate or an inward struggle that influenced their lives.

* * * * *

The first question to cross the mind of anyone who reads GULLIVER'S TRAVELS with the object of his reading being to learn something which person or group of persons represents the real idea of humanity.

One travels through the book with Gulliver into places where people are small and think small thoughts, where they are large and still think small thoughts, and where the people think and act like animals and the animals think and act like people should think and act. It is my opinion that the last group in the list that I have just written is the one that brings to mind more about the way people are supposed to act but less of the way they really do.

While reading the book, we are not really going with Lemuel Gulliver to Lilliput, Brobdingnag, Laputa and the land of the Houyhnhnms, but on a reading journey though the far reaches of the mind of Jonathan Swift. Swift is telling us that he has really seen people who do such ridiculous things as choose their public officials by a means that has nothing at all to do with the public office that the man is to hold though not necessarily in the same way that the Lilliputians did. He is showing man as he looks to him and as he would probably look to himself if he took the time to stop behaving like an idiot and look.

Swift uses people in his book to show us the utter foolishness of our world-famous and traditional institutions such as the idea of waging war over trifles, putting too much stress on one thing all the time and leaving other things that are just as important to work things out for themselves.

The land of the Houyhnhnms is more of an idea of what the world would be like if people acted more like the houyhnhnms and less like the Yahoos. It is a sorry situation indeed, according to Swift that such people do exist in this world and that he, like all the rest of us, must identify himself with them simply because he looks like them.

No people like the Houyhnhnms really existed or really can unless a drastic change is made in this world. Even in the home of these intelligent horses one is not free from the corruption that has settled on all mankind as he evolved from the cave-dwelling, ape-like aborigine to the "civilized" man of today. It is to our discredit that such a situation exists in this world in which a people like the Yahoos can survive. As for the houyhnhnms, they are just an idea. The Yahoos, Laputians, Brobdingnags, and Lilliputians are all much better examples of what is actually real and human in the whole book.

Gulliver is the only person in the whole book who can really be considered as a human. He is made up of all the traits of all the rest of the peoples in the book. Are we to assume, then, that all of us are a combination of the men in this book? Evidently this is so. It is especially interesting to notice that the only beings in this book who act as if they have any sense whatsoever are not humans at all but a form of horses who have more brain, or at least are more conscious of the use of them than any other beings in the book.

As the book ends, and Gulliver returns home we see that Swift has the very same idea of what people should be like because Gulliver is forever unable to live among ordinary mortals.

* * * * *

DON JUAN: CANTO I is the first of sixteen cantos in a satirical epic by Byron. The story is about a young Spanish subject who is seduced by a mar woman, and later on flees the vengeance of her husband. Byron uses this ep to satirize English life, manners, and morals. His motivation in writing of Don Juan was to ridicule social conditions and hypocrisy.

The epic gets under way with the introduction of Don Jose, Donna Inez, a Juan. Donna Inez, Juan's mother, is actually Byron's wife who is being satirized. Byron had been divorced from his wife. Lady Byron was consta trying to find faults in him. This aggravated his sense of guilt and led to hysterical brutality and separation. The reader can see, through Donna Ine exactly how Byron pictured his wife, and how he could use Donna Inez as a means of ridiculing the characteristics he considered were odious about his wife and others like her in the world. Byron's ridiculing of "learned virgin and their self-righteous state probably would appeal to henpecked husbands everywhere.

Don Jose and Donna Inez were always arguing and eventually Inez tried to prove Jose insane. Lady Byron did the same thing. However, Jose died an Inez was left with her hatred and Juan. The "hearers" of her case against husband were typical high class professionals; "professional hypocrites."

Juan was sole heir of his father's belongings. Also, Donna Inez felt he should have the best instruction in studies of all subjects. Juan was a well learned, refined boy on his way to heaven by the age of sixteen. Then Don Julia, a married woman, fell in love with him. Later on, she asked the Virgin Mary to forgive her for disguising her marriage vows, and she prayed she might return to Alfonso, her husband, and not see Juan anymore. However, the sins of pleasure tempted her to see Juan again. Byron begins to satirize the weaknesses of women and ridicule them because they fall so ea Byron had a contempt for women in his category.

Alfonso later suspects his wife an adulteress and attacks her bed chambe one evening. He searches everywhere but doesn't find anyone. Donna Julia denounces him for suspecting her an adulteress. Alfonso finds a pair of me shoes in her room and fetches his sword to kill whoever is hiding thereabou Juan escapes after a skirmish with Alfonso. Finally Julia and Alfonso get divorced, Julia is sent to a nunnery, and Juan travels through Europe in ho of mending his former morals.

* * * * *

Final Essay Test

Directions: Your purpose in this theme is to show by specific examples your experiences with literature have helped you appreciate more fully t particular area of human experience suggested by the assignment in the last paragraph on this page. Therefore, you need to be thoroughly familiar with the fiction and nonfiction works from which you plan to take your examples. In this context, by specific examples we mean those that pinpoint exactly the relationship you see between certain works of literature and coreesponding aspects of life.

Students who do well in English are accustomed to and often agree with statements in praise of books and reading. Such a statement is Christopher Morley's comment, "When you sell a man a book you don't sell him just twelve ounces of paper and ink and glue--you sell him a whole new life." But consider the following statements by men who also have given serious thought to books and who have in many cases been authors themselves:

Oliver Goldsmith: Books teach us little of the world.

La Rouchefoucauld: It is more necessary to study men than books.

Rousseau: I hate books for they only teach people to talk about what they do not understand.

Lichtenberg: This book has had the effect which good books usually have: it has made the fools more foolish; the intelligent more intelligent, and left the majority as they were.

Latin proverb: Beware the man of one book.

Disraeli: Books are fatal: They are the curse of the human race. Nine tenths of existing books are nonsense, and the clever books are the refutation of that nonsense. The greatest misfortune that ever befell man was the invention of printing.

Reviewing your own reading experience, both in school and out, write an essay in which you discuss both the worth and the "dangers" of books. You do not have to refer to any of the quotations above unless you want to. (In the time given, it would probably be impossible to write an organized essay that would include all or even most of them.) Rather, regard the quotations as possible springboards for your own thinking and use only those that seem particularly relevant. Be certain, however, to refer to specific books or kinds of books as examples or illustrations of the opinions you state.

* * * * *

1. This, of course, is the purpose of life; to be happy and make as few mistakes in gaining happiness as possible. Experience is a good teacher, but so are books. Also, we only derive the lesson from a book not the pain of life. Thus, books give us the experience that we cannot gain for ourselves, besides the undesired experience which brings with it suffering that we would like to personally avoid.

Girl--grade B

2. ...I would say that by reading books, one builds insight so that he can face life with a minimum of anxiety....In conclusion, I think that books are worthwhile because they help a person to find out and understand his place in life.

Boy--grade B

3. Of all the books I have read, there have been very few that I can honestly say I really understood and enjoyed. Many of the books which I have read such as: GREAT EXPECTATIONS seemed to me very uninteresting and contained many things which are not important in our modern life of today. To many GREAT EXPECTATIONS was one of the greatest novels written, but it wasn't my type of book that I preferred to read. To me it seemed dense and far out and was very hard for me to understand.

Boy--grade D

4. For instance, take the play MACBETH. This play kept me, and probably everyone else in suspense until we finished reading it. I feel that this play held too much of my interest. For one thing, I couldn't lay it down for a minute...

Girl--grade B

5. The avid reader of books reaps the essence of human nature. Through reading, he learns that he must search for his own unique identity....

Boy--grade B

6. Books really are the outlines of experiences.

Boy--grade C

7. Though the story PARADISE LOST portrays only Milton's thoughts, a further discussion reveals those of others and together with one's own thought, one derives a more mature knowledge and attitude toward the books.

Girl--grade B

8. The novels WUTHERING HEIGHTS, GREAT EXPECTATIONS, and THE HEART OF THE MATTER are presented in a long, drawn-out manner a story of great unreality. The novels are confusing and not worth all the time and trouble it takes to read them.

Boy--grade C

9. One of the most starkly realistic books I've read was THE JUNGLE by Upton Sinclair. Such a book does nothing less than to open one's eyes to the utterly degrading conditions which did exist and continue to remain in the world today.

Girl--grade B